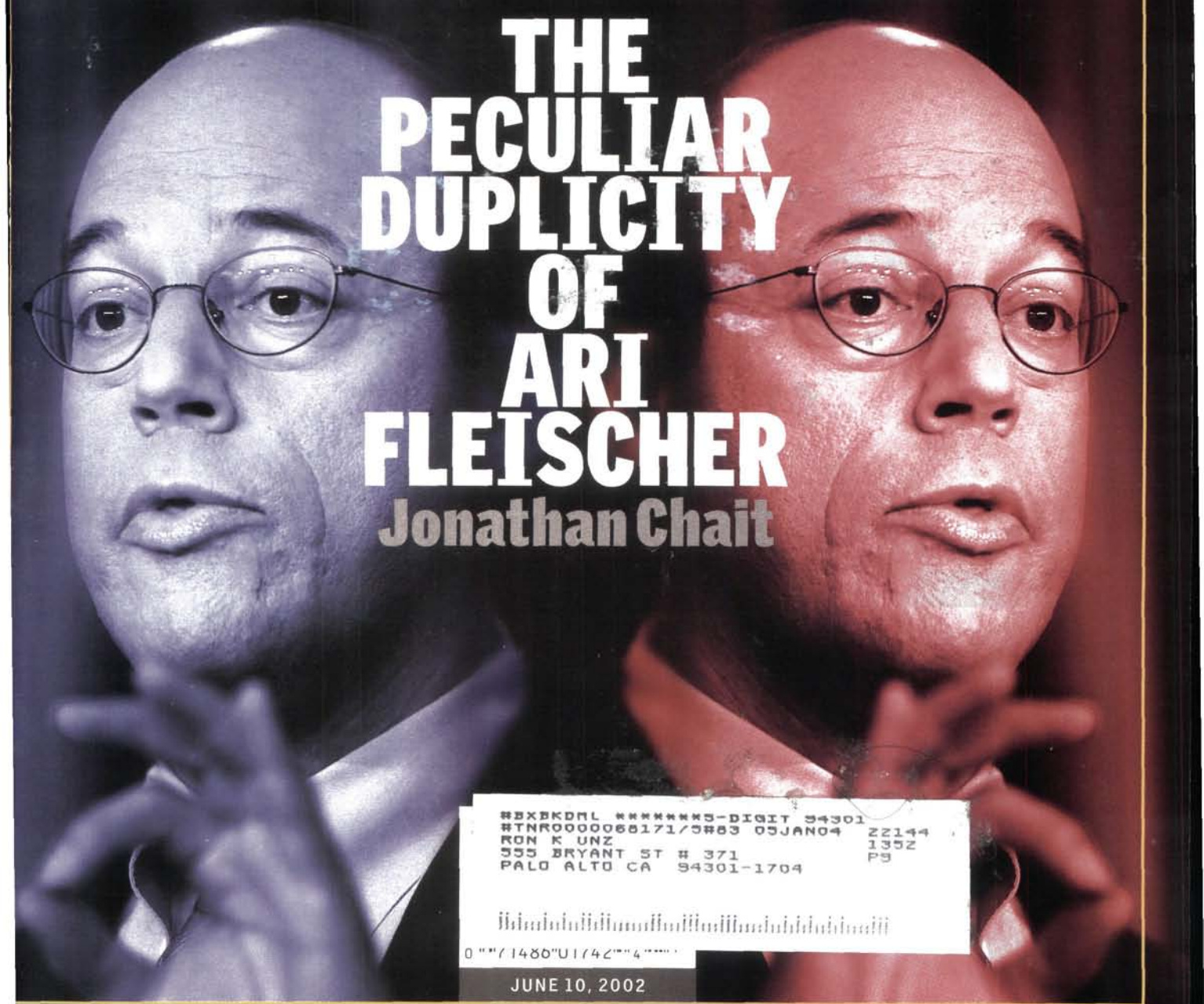
CIVILIZATION AND MISUNDERSTANDING Amartya Sen

THE

NEW REPUBLIC

THE RIGHT'S DOUBLE STANDARD ON INDIA Peter Beinart

W.'S DOUBLE STANDARD ON DEMOCRACY Lawrence F. Kaplan



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Providing Equity in Assessing Students with Disabilities

Kurt M. Landgraf, President & CEO of Educational Testing Service

Educational Testing Service firmly believes that we must be able to accommodate all students to make sure they have a fair opportunity to demonstrate what they know and have learned. As standardized testing grows more important in the education reform movement, the key is to be able to accurately assess the performance of students with disabilities along with their peers without disabilities.

I have great interest in all students with disabilities because I have a cognitively disabled son and decades of service to The Arc, a national advocacy organization for people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities. While I am proud of ETS's experience of providing equity in assessment for students with disabilities, I know that we must spend even more time and energy identifying the needs, evaluating options, and determining the proper form of assessment with appropriate accommodations.

We must be able to accommodate all students to make sure they have a fair opportunity to demonstrate what they know.

If it seems like a tough row to hoe, it is. But it can and must be done. Since its inception in 1947, and long before any federal legislation ever appeared on the books, ETS has offered accommodations and services for the assessment of students with disabilities.

Before initial passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975, more than one million students with disabilities were excluded from school in this country, and hundreds of thousands were undereducated. Since then, assisted by passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, our nation has made great strides to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn. As a recent study published by the Center on Education Policy stated, not only are children with physical, mental, and other disabilities attending school in record numbers, they are also progressing farther in schooling than ever before. That is an achievement in which everyone involved can take a measure of satisfaction.

The "No Child Left Behind" Act advances that goal further, making it mandatory for children with disabilities to be included in the state- and district-wide assessment programs, with the results shared with the public. Reauthorization of IDEA at appropriate funding levels will provide the means for us to better gauge the performance of all students, with appropriate accommodations if necessary. Such a national commitment is essential if we are to continue to make progress.

We must ensure that time, effort, and resources are available to effectively determine appropriate teaching strategies as well as testing accommodations aimed at assuring the fullest possible access to educational success. The words "No Child Left Behind" mean exactly that, and apply to all of our children, regardless of the physical and cognitive challenges they face.

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We invite you to continue this dialogue by contacting us via e-mail at: issues@ets.org

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CORRESPONDENCE

Doctrine of faith

TO THE EDITORS:

Peter Beinart's TRB about the punditry's relative silence on the pedophilia scandal within the Catholic priesthood assumes that non-Catholic commentators have less standing to comment on the issues ("Limits," May 6). This is not supportable. The Catholic Church's response to widespread criminal behavior within its ranks can hardly be termed a doctrinal dispute fit only for internal debate. By extending that argument, one could say that discussion of the role of Islamic beliefs in the September 11 tragedy would be appropriate only for Muslim believers. And I would imagine that few North American columnists are either Hutu or Tutsi; yet their lack of tribal status did not deprive these writers of their right to deplore crime—or exempt them from their duty to explore its causes.

KRISHNA SINGHO
Washington, D.C.

The holy see

TO THE EDITORS:

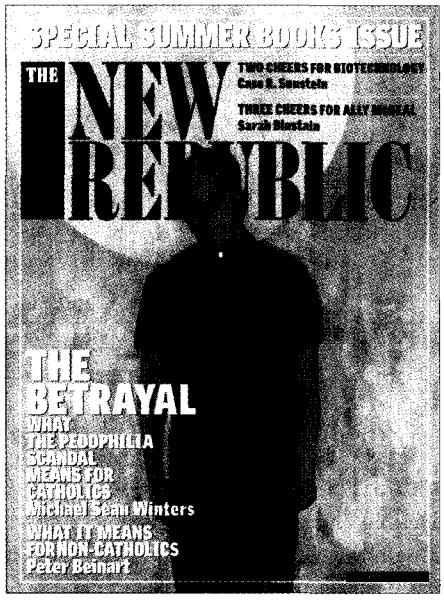
Michael Sean Winters calls upon American bishops to be candid ("The Betrayal," May 6). How, in God's name, can there be candor about anything sexual in the face of an edict from the Infallible One that celibacy shall not be discussed? True, allowing priests to live normal, healthy lives will not eliminate sexual abuses by clergymen. But it is high time that the Catholic Church begins either to apply the imperatives inherent in the Natural Law (that law so beloved of Catholic theologians) to themselves—or else remove sex, and especially sex between consenting adults, from the Vatican's agenda.

DR. ECK PRUD'HOMME JR.
Fort Worth, Texas

Go west

TO THE EDITORS:

Franklin Foer called Alaskan self-reliance a myth ("Welfare State," May 6). He's wrong. It's just impossible for Alaskans to show their self-reliant side when the federal government not only controls two-thirds of our land, but also blocks access to



most of Alaska's natural resources in the rest of the state. While federal per-capita spending is higher in Alaska, it's not exceptional if one remembers the state's exceptional cost of construction and living. Do your readers pay $7 for a gallon of milk? Barrow residents do. Alaskans would certainly be willing to give up much of the federal aid we receive—and the red tape attached—if we were permitted to develop the oil under a tiny part of the Arctic coastal plain; develop the coal and minerals under lands currently cut off by parks and preserves; and get our natural gas to market.

It's not that Alaskans want to live in a welfare state; it's just that the federal government continues to treat Alaskans as stepchildren who, in their bureaucratic minds, are unfit to manage our own resources and environment.

FRANK MURKOWSKI
U.S. Senator, Alaska
Washington, D.C.

Fever pitch

TO THE EDITORS:

I would like to take strong exception to "Cabin Fever" by Sarah Wildman (April 29). I have been a member of the Log Cabin Republicans (LCR) for five years. Contrary to the conflict-driven, rumor-mongering "reporting" of Wildman, I have never seen the organization as strong as it is at this very moment. In fact, I would argue that President George W. Bush's term has brought a renewed enthusiasm to an already vibrant organization. The real facts about LCR can be found at *www.lcr.org*. For example, at LCR's black-tie annual dinner in April, $50,000 was raised for LCR's PAC to help gay-friendly Republican candidates; the first major-party gay candidate for lieutenant governor spoke; and I met a number of openly gay Bush administration appointees.

It's easy for the media to bash conservative, gay Republicans. Why not focus on the changing face of the gay community and how many of us refuse to be told how to think and act by the monolithic gay left and their tools at the Human Rights Campaign?

BRUCE CARROLL
Alexandria, Virginia

TO THE EDITORS:

Wildman forgoes credible criticism for knee-jerk bashing. She's appalled that LCR is "[c]heering blatantly anti-gay policies and appointees" of the Bush administration. An example? "[W]hen Bush nominated John Ashcroft, one of the Senate's most consistently anti-gay members, to be attorney general, LCR supported the appointment." Five paragraphs later she tosses aside LCR's explanation that the group had "exacted statements of support from Ashcroft during his nomination process." In fact, thanks to lobbying by LCR and others, during his confirmation testimony Ashcroft stated repeatedly that sexual orientation would not be a consideration in Department of Justice employment or appointments; that he would enforce all laws and regulations protecting gay and lesbian federal workers from employment discrimination; that the gay and lesbian employee organization DOJ Pride would continue to meet and organize in the Department under his leadership; and that federal civil rights laws would be vigorously enforced. Shortly after his confirmation, LCR's leadership secured an unprecedented meeting with the new attorney general, at which he pledged to "enforce the law equally for all Americans, and that equal protection under the law means that no one will be left out."

To the surprise of many liberals, Ashcroft recently invoked the federal Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act in an indictment for the slaying of two lesbian hikers in Shenandoah National Park. According to the Justice Department, "The United States maintains that the defendant hated women and lesbians and that hatred was a motive for his killing." Isn't this the way it's supposed to work? Or would liberals simply prefer shouting, "Bigot, bigot, go away," to working with conservatives and advancing their attitudes on gay and lesbian issues?

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The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Please address letters to Correspondence, TNR, 1331 H Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 (letters may also be sent electronically to tnr@aol.com). All letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be fewer than 200 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Please do not send letters via fax.

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ANTI-SEMITISM.
It's not a HISTORY LESSON.
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Part 2. Once Again, Anti-Zionism Becomes Anti-Semitism

Anti-Zionism is showing its true colors as deep-rooted anti-Semitism. No longer are the Arab nations camouflaging their hatred of Jews in the guise of attacking Israel.

Here are some blatant examples of the unprecedented anti-Semitic wave throughout the Middle East.

Conspiracy Theories — The outlandish charge continues (even in the face of the Osama bin Laden videotape) that the Israelis, through their Mossad, destroyed the World Trade Center on 9/11, and as proof they claim that 4,000 Jews did not report for work that day because they were in on it.

Holocaust Denial — Growing Arab propaganda says the documented atrocities of World War II are Jewish fabrications, and the Jews made up the Holocaust "lie" so that the world would grant them the nation of Israel.

Comparison of Nazism & Hitler with Zionism & Israel — Israelis are depicted as Nazis, and Jewish leadership as Hitler, and the Israelis' treatment of Palestinians as even worse than how the Nazis behaved.

Age-old Anti-Semitic Stereotypes — Reappearance of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and "blood libel" showing Jews as vengeful, greedy and evil.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Indian Ink

CONSERVATIVES HAD BETTER hope *The Wall Street Journal* and *National Review* aren't read closely in New Delhi. Because if they are, some angry Indian nationalist is going to point out the glaring contradiction between the American right's line on the crisis between India and Pakistan and its line on the crisis between Israel and the Palestinians.

Let's consider the similarities between the two conflicts. Like Israel, India is suffering horribly at the hands of terrorists. Last October, 31 Indians were killed in a suicide raid near the Kashmiri legislature in Srinigar. Last December, terrorists attacked the Indian parliament in New Delhi, killing 14. And this May, 34 Indians—mostly women and children—were butchered at an army base in Kashmir.

Just as Israel holds the Palestinian Authority responsible for the terrorism it suffers, India holds Pakistan responsible for the terrorism in the disputed region of Kashmir. And like Israel, India has a point. In fact, Pakistani leader Pervez Musharraf's relationship to Kashmiri terrorism is remarkably similar to Yasir Arafat's relationship to Palestinian terrorism. Just as Arafat spent decades plotting violence against Israel, General Musharraf spent the 1990s developing close ties to Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Laskar-e-Taiba, two of Kashmir's primary terrorist groups. On May 29, 1999, Indian intelligence intercepted (and the CIA verified) a telephone call between Musharraf and his deputy, Lieutenant General Mohammed Aziz. In it, Aziz said of the terrorist organizations in Kashmir, "We have them by the scruff of the neck and whenever desired, we can regulate the situation."

Less than five months after that phone call, Musharraf overthrew Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif; and according to press accounts, terrorism in Kashmir almost immediately increased. But after September 11 Musharraf quickly became an ally of the United States. And so this January, with India threatening to retaliate for the December raid on its parliament, and the United States pressuring Pakistan not to divert resources from the war against Al Qaeda, Musharraf had his Oslo moment. In a nationally televised speech, he announced that "no organization will be allowed to perpetuate terrorism behind the garb of the Kashmiri cause," banned five fundamentalist groups, and arrested some 2,000 extremists. But, as with Arafat's arrests and condemnations, Musharraf's proved illusory. Most of the banned organizations have regrouped under different names, most of the militants arrested were freed within weeks, and India claims that cross-border terrorism has returned to pre-"crackdown" levels.

So India is threatening to do what Israel did in March—to launch what Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee calls "a decisive battle" to destroy Pakistan's infrastructure of terror once and for all. You'd think the conservative press would applaud. After all, in the middle of Israel's offensive, the *Journal* penned an editorial entitled "NO EQUIVALENCE," in which it said, "[T]he U.S. has no moral alternative to standing firmly behind Prime Minister's Sharon's war against such terror." Not long after, *National Review* insisted that in their "fight against Palestinian terrorism, the Israelis are fighting another front in our war."

You'd be wrong. On May 23, the *Journal* called Vajpayee's statement "dangerous" and claimed (talk about equivalence!) that in Kashmir "there's more than enough blame to go around." *National Review*—far from seeing India as another front in our war on terrorism—implied that its military threats were irrational and childish, pleading in a January article by James S. Robbins, "[D]on't freak out on us."

When Sharon refused to negotiate with the Palestinians until they ceased their violence, the *Journal* warned, "If Mr. Powell now waters even that basic demand down . . . the U.S. will truly be rewarding terror." *National Review* fretted that "the administration loses in so many ways when it bows to the idea that it must resolve the Mideast crisis by pressuring Israel." But now that Vajpayee is insisting on the same precondition, the conservative press dismisses it. "The U.S. has no choice but to mediate," counseled the *Journal*, endorsing Musharraf's call for international intervention, a position India has long rejected.

Conservatives might claim that as a practical matter, the circumstances in Kashmir and the circumstances in the West Bank differ. The United States can't take as hard a line with Musharraf as with Arafat, they might say, because we need his support in the war on Al Qaeda. And we can't let India be as aggressive as Israel, because an Indian invasion risks nuclear war. One can disagree with these arguments—for instance, allowing Israel to depose Arafat, as many conservatives proposed, might not have imperiled the war on Al Qaeda, but it certainly would have risked Arab support for the war on Iraq. And Pakistan's nuclear capability could be considered a reason *for* India to try to knock out its terrorist infrastructure, given the danger that those nukes could otherwise fall into terrorist hands. But regardless, the important point is that these are practical objections, not moral ones. And as such they implicitly concede what conservative commentary on Israel never does—that not every war on terrorism can be solved by military force. The only way to sustain such a principle is by arbitrarily designating that certain conflicts are part of the war on terrorism and that others—even if they meet the same criteria—are not. Which is exactly what much of the conservative press has done on Kashmir.

This is not to say conservatives are entirely wrong in their view of either crisis. On Israel, they are right to insist on the moral *inequivalency* of Palestinian attacks on civilians and Israeli reprisals against terrorists. That inequivalency, in fact, badly needs to be injected into the American debate over Kashmir, a debate defined by a "plague on both your houses" condescension that breezes over Musharraf's complicity with terrorism and India's moral superiority as a secular democracy.

And on Kashmir, the right correctly highlights the necessity of a political solution. It admits that in its governance of the region, India has not lived up to its democratic ideals, and that no military response can substitute for a political process aimed at returning to the people of Kashmir broad autonomy and basic human rights. But in conservative commentary on Israel, that political element is almost always missing. And so the *Journal* and *National Review* rarely criticize Sharon's efforts to preclude a negotiated path toward a viable Palestinian state. In India's war on terrorism, the fist is always wrong. In Israel's, the fist is all there is.

The broader problem is that while the right has been quick to enunciate a set of principles it hopes will undergird America's war on terrorism, it has done so without taking careful account of the specific cases to which those principles must apply. When conservatives did that during the cold war, the result was hideous blind spots—such as support for Angola's Jonas Savimbi and the leaders of apartheid South Africa because both were simplistically deemed anti-Communist. This time around, the costs could be greater still. Moralism can be an ennobling force in U.S. foreign policy. But moralism combined with parochialism can sometimes be worse than no moralism at all.

PETER BEINART

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Armed Resistance

LAST WEEK, AS thousands of Europeans took to the streets to protest American plans to topple Saddam Hussein, a similar cry went up along the Potomac. It didn't come from liberal editorial writers; and it didn't come from Democratic members of Congress.

No, the opposition to invading Iraq came from the very force that would be doing the invading: the U.S. military. We know this because high-ranking officers have been leaking like sieves—to *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and others—about how silly they consider the whole enterprise to be. In the *Post*, for instance, "one top general" told reporter Thomas Ricks that "the 'Iraq hysteria' he detected last winter in some senior Bush administration officials has been diffused." And indeed, over the past week, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and President George W. Bush himself have gone to unusual lengths to downplay the possibility of military action against Saddam. We find that disappointing and hope that in the coming months the president will remember what he seemed to understand so well in the searing weeks after September 11: The case for taking on Saddam doesn't require believing that an invasion carries no risks, but merely that they pale beside the risk of allowing his regime to remain in power. But in the meantime, the president needs to make another decision: He needs to fire some of his generals. Not because they oppose going to war with Iraq, but because they have been advertising their opposition in the nation's newspapers.

That the military brass opposes going to war shouldn't surprise anyone not frozen in amber. The officer corps resisted doing so in Iraq a decade ago. It resisted doing so in Bosnia half a decade ago. It resisted doing so in Kosovo three years ago. And even September 11 couldn't shake their reluctance to put sizable forces on the ground. In last December's crucial battle in Tora Bora, for instance, General Tommy Franks's decision to rely on lethargic Afghan proxies rather than American G.I.s allowed the enemy to escape.

But timidity is one thing; insubordination is another. The military establishment has crossed that line several times over the last decade—when a general named Colin Powell penned op-eds in 1992 cautioning policymakers against intervening in Bosnia; and in 1999, when the Army brazenly dragged its feet in delivering to Albania the Apache helicopters President Bill Clinton had ordered for the Kosovo campaign. And now it appears they are doing so once more. Of course, senior officers have every right to voice their concerns and reservations—at least until the president makes a final decision. But they don't have the right to use the media to create a political environment that forecloses the president's options. Doing so violates the very essence of American military professionalism, which is defined by the Constitution's strict subordination of the military to its civilian masters in the executive and legislative branches.

But our system demands obligations of civilians as well. Principal among these is the obligation to wield effective control over the armed forces. When, for instance, Air Force Chief of Staff Michael Dugan leaked Gulf war plans to the press in 1990, then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney summarily dismissed him (nor was he the only general Cheney fired). In fact, the Bush *fils* team came to power vowing to reassert civilian control, which they blamed Clinton for eroding during the 1990s. And, yet, two-time Defense Secretary Rumsfeld—one of whose "rules" is attending "faithfully to the question of civilian control: It is a constitutional requirement, and it is for the secretary to see that it is a reality"—has done nothing of the sort. Having been rolled by the service chiefs during his campaign to "transform" the military, and having allowed Army officials to campaign with impunity against his decision to kill the Crusader mobile-artillery piece, Rumsfeld (and the rest of the Bush team) now dismisses reports of the officer corps's Beltway maneuvering over Iraq as so much Washington chatter. But that chatter is the sound of a leaderless military establishment.

It is also the sound of an officer corps operating in a strategic vacuum. Indeed, for all the tactical skill it demonstrated during the war in Afghanistan, this divided administration has no coherent strategy when it comes to Iraq. Powell clearly wants to avoid a war there. Rumsfeld just as clearly wants to start one. And the president doesn't seem to know what he wants. In the absence of an Iraq strategy, it should come as no surprise that the nation's military leaders are devising one themselves. Still, that is the president's job.

He should do his. And the generals should do theirs. At the moment, sadly, neither are. ■

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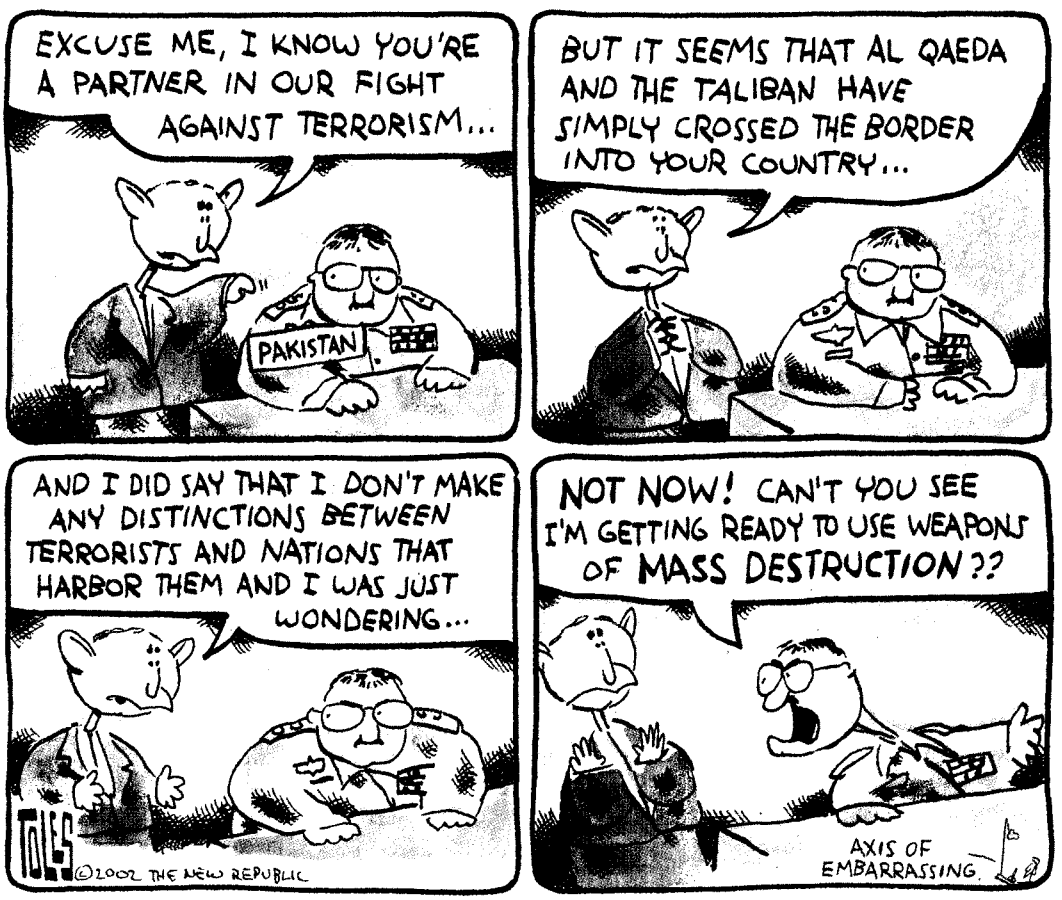
NOTEBOOK

LAST REFUGE OF SCOUNDRELS I: One of the mundane barriers to deficit spending is the federal debt ceiling. If Congress wants more red ink, it has to specifically authorize itself to run up more debt. This ritual frequently prompts political maneuvering, and this year is no exception: Democrats want to use the vote to publicize the adverse fiscal effects of the Bush tax cut. So Republicans, in an effort to protect their members from having to cast an embarrassing vote for more debt, have attached a debt-ceiling measure to a popular bill to boost spending for the military and post-9/11 disaster relief. All this is typical gamesmanship. What's not typical is that Republicans have turned around and used the vote to impugn Democrats' patriotism, a tactic that—you may have noticed—the GOP is employing with alarming frequency. "[T]his is an emergency defense supplemental at [a] time of war," bellowed House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bill Young. "I think it would be well for us to move this bill quickly so we can prove to the world, friends, and enemies that we are serious about fighting this war." Speaker Dennis Hastert added, "If you vote no, you ought to know that you are voting against our military; you are voting against the people of New York." The bill passed the House, but it's worth asking why, if it was a matter of life and death, the GOP insisted on entangling it in a routine partisan spat? Because, despite their jingoistic oratory, Republicans still seem to value tax cuts above all else. "You can't have it both ways and say, 'I want to fight the war, but I don't want to pay for it. I want freedom, but I don't want to pay for it,'" declared House GOP Conference Chairman J.C. Watts. Indeed, Representative Watts, you can't.

LAST REFUGE OF SCOUNDRELS II: The last time Georgia Senate candidate Saxby Chambliss found himself in the national spotlight, he was apologizing for having declared at a November event that one way to improve homeland security would be to "just turn [the sheriff] loose and have him arrest every Muslim that crosses the state line." The Republican representative later claimed that the comment was a joke that was "taken out of context." Well, the comedy continues. Chambliss's latest howler, reports *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, has been to declare that the actions of his opponent, Senator Max Cleland, "directly contradict" his oath to "protect and defend" the nation. The specific action in question? Cleland—along with 56 other presumably traitorous senators (eleven of them Republicans)—voted against a 1997 motion that would have expanded the Chemical Weapons Treaty by banning any inspectors from nations that had sponsored terrorism or violated nonproliferation laws. (The treaty already enabled the United States to block individual inspectors from suspect nations.) The attack on Cleland's patriotism would be repulsive even if the senator weren't a decorated veteran who lost both legs and his right arm in the Vietnam War. Or maybe Chambliss was only joking?

IN 2000, THE PRESIDENCY; IN 2002, THE SENATE: You'd think if there was at least one Democrat the Green Party could get behind, it would be Minnesota's Paul Wellstone. Wellstone is the most liberal member of the U.S. Senate; and Greens are always insisting that their problem with the Democratic Party is that, in the words of Ralph Nader, "the party has been seized by its conservative, reactionary, pro-corporate wing." But Wellstone evidently isn't liberal enough for Minnesota Greens. Although the senator is engaged in a tight race with former Saint Paul Mayor Norm Coleman—a candidate strongly backed by President George


EXCUSE ME, I KNOW YOU'RE A PARTNER IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM...
PAKISTAN
BUT IT SEEMS THAT AL QAEDA AND THE TALIBAN HAVE SIMPLY CROSSED THE BORDER INTO YOUR COUNTRY...
AND I DID SAY THAT I DON'T MAKE ANY DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN TERRORISTS AND NATIONS THAT HARBOR THEM AND I WAS JUST WONDERING...
TOLES ©2002 THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOT NOW! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M GETTING READY TO USE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION??
AXIS OF EMBARRASSING

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W. Bush—and the outcome of that race could easily determine control of the Senate, the Minnesota Greens last week ignored calls to forego fielding a Senate candidate and nominated Ed "Eagle Man" McGaa to run against Wellstone. The reason, Minnesota Green Party Spokesperson Holle Brian told *The Progressive*'s Ruth Conniff, is that Wellstone has been too supportive of Bush's war on terrorism. "We want to give people in Minnesota the opportunity to vote their conscience," Brian explained, "[i]f they're opposed to military actions in the Middle East, the Patriot Act, the sanctions on Iraq." But it turns out the man the Greens have nominated—McGaa, a former Marine who fought in Korea and Vietnam—is no pacifist. He told Conniff that he disagrees with the Greens' platform plank opposing the war on terrorism and thinks the United States was justified in its military response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. As for whether he will siphon off votes from Wellstone and throw the election—and perhaps the Senate—to the GOP, McGaa told Conniff, "I'm an American Indian. We're not as analytical as you folks are." Fine. But what's the excuse for the rest of the Minnesota Greens?

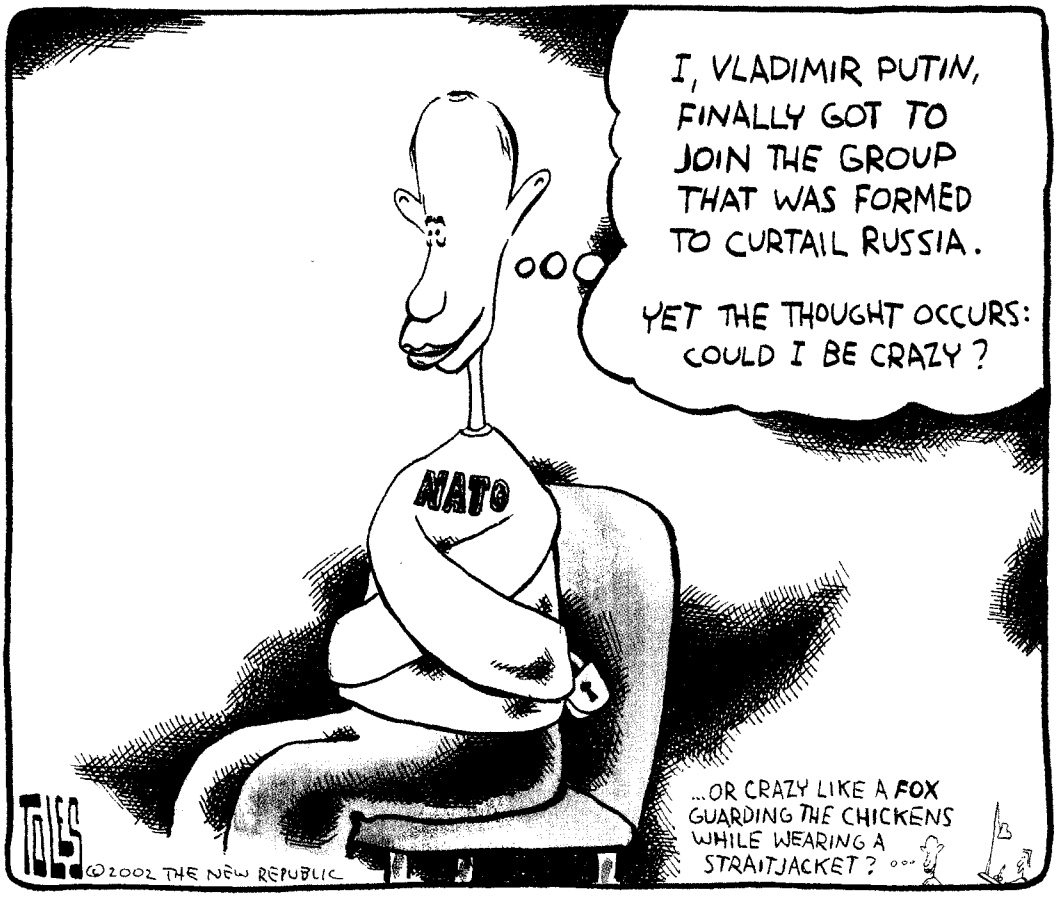
THEY HAVE HISPANICS, TOO: "During a discussion between President George W. Bush . . . and [Brazilian President] Fernando Henrique Cardoso . . . Bush stunned his counterpart with the question: 'Do you have blacks, too?' [National security adviser Condoleezza Rice], who noticed how astounded the Brazilian was by the question, saved the situation by explaining to Bush: 'Mr. President, Brazil probably has more blacks than the U.S.A; it is said to have more black people than any country outside Africa.' Brazil's President Cardoso later deemed that with regard to Latin America, Bush is 'still learning.'"—*Der Spiegel*, May 19 (translated from the German)

MORE INFORMATION THAN WE NEEDED: "An act of nostalgia: I approach Europe by sea, on the Dover-Calais ferry. This is how I first encountered the continent in the summer of 1966—a season remembered for *Rubber Soul*, the Spencer Davis Group, cheap wine, an English football triumph, and the belated loss of virginity."—Joe Klein, writing in *The Guardian*, May 28

SPOT THE MISSING DETAIL: "Israeli troops have arrested a Reuters photographer, the second Palestinian journalist working for the international news organisation to be held without charge in recent weeks. Soldiers stopped Suhaib Jadallah Salem, 22, at a checkpoint in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday evening as he was travelling in a Reuters vehicle towards the southern border town of Rafah."—Reuters, May 23

"The Israeli army on Monday released a Palestinian journalist employed by the Reuters news wire, five days after his arrest in the Gaza Strip, the British news agency said. Reuters photographer, Suhaib Jadallah Salem, 22, was detained on May 22 near the southern Gaza Strip border town of Rafah, from which he was planning to cross into Egypt."—Agence France-Presse, May 27

"IDF troops arrested a Reuters photographer in the Gaza Strip last Wednesday, for what military sources said were his links to terror activities. Suhaib Jadallah Salem, 22, who was intercepted while traveling to Rafiah, at the southern end of the Strip, was in possession of a hand grenade when he was seized, military sources said."—*Ha'aretz*, May 26 ■


I, VLADIMIR PUTIN, FINALLY GOT TO JOIN THE GROUP THAT WAS FORMED TO CURTAIL RUSSIA.
YET THE THOUGHT OCCURS: COULD I BE CRAZY?
NATO
...OR CRAZY LIKE A FOX GUARDING THE CHICKENS WHILE WEARING A STRAITJACKET?
TOLES
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On the Hill

Intelligence Test

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

WITH DEMOCRATS PRESSING their case (albeit more subtly than at first) for tough investigations of the Bush administration's pre-9/11 failures, the White House is determined to depict the criticism as cheap election-year partisanship. Which is why the most irritating figure to the Bushies right now is not Dick Gephardt, Hillary Clinton, or Tom Daschle—it's Richard Shelby.

Shelby isn't known for making news. The Alabama Republican senator's profile tends to be as plain as his burly Southern-sheriff looks, deadpan courtliness, and ho-hum sound bites. But with a political battle raging over the investigation into 9/11, Shelby, vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has suddenly become one of the most quote-worthy men on Capitol Hill. He has railed against the FBI, saying the agency was "asleep or inept or both," and that it "failed the American people." He accuses the Bush administration of not cooperating with a congressional investigation and hints that he could support the sort of blue-ribbon 9/11 commission that Daschle badly wants—and that the White House fervently opposes. He has called repeatedly for the resignation of CIA Director George Tenet, whom the Bush administration strongly defends. Throw in Shelby's support for the Democrats' effort to force a recalcitrant Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge to testify before Congress (another issue that makes Dick Cheney's lip curl), and you can see why the *Los Angeles Times*, bestowing the media's highest linguistic honor, referred to Shelby this week as a "maverick."

Predictably, congressional Democrats are cheering Shelby on. "Clearly it's helpful to us to have Republicans in addition to John McCain arguing for a more independent role for the legislative branch," notes one party official. A Democratic operative recently sent reporters an "in case you missed it" e-mail with quotes from a Shelby interview with *The Washington Times*, in which he argued that "Democrats have an obligation to ask questions about who knew what." And predictably, this has not endeared Shelby to the Bush administration. At a May 17 press briefing, White House press secretary Ari Fleischer, in an effort to remind people why the administration didn't issue pre-9/11 terror warnings, included Shelby in an otherwise all-Democratic list of senators who had complained about false terror alerts last fall.

It's a strange turn of events. Even if Shelby sounds for the moment like a junior McCain, he's an unlikely thorn in George W. Bush's side, given that he abandoned the Democratic Party in its hour of need after the 1994 elections. Unlike McCain, he has shown no broader sympathy for his colleagues across the aisle—generally conducting himself as an orthodox conservative and a fierce partisan. In fact, Shelby isn't really waging a battle against the White House at all. He's waging an entirely different, and highly personal, battle against an intelligence establishment that over the years has wound up on the wrong side of his long-grinding axes. President Bush just happens to be in the way.

For Richard Shelby, political grudges are nothing new. Consider the story of his 1994 party switch. After eight years in the House and eight more in the Senate as a surly conservative Democrat, Shelby reached his breaking point under Bill Clinton. He described Clinton's economic plan as "the taxman cometh" and his health care plan as "ill-conceived, unworkable, and unwanted by the American people." But by most accounts, it wasn't ideology that pushed him over the brink; it was Shelby's fury over White House snubs. In 1993 Clinton operatives saw to it that a lucrative NASA project was moved from Alabama to Texas. And when Clinton honored the University of Alabama's NCAA champion football team at a White House ceremony in March of that year, Shelby was given just one ticket; his Democratic Alabama colleague, Howell Heflin, got 15. Shelby got even by kicking the

GEOFFREY GRAHN

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Philadelphia Freedom

ohn E. Chubb is chief ucation officer, Edison chools; distinguished isiting fellow, Hoover stitution; and member, over's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

Philadelphia, where America's founders gathered to declare independence and defend liberty, has struck another blow for freedom—and one that could be nearly as historic. This spring Philadelphia's School Reform Commission (SRC) voted to privatize up to 75 of the city's 240 schools. The management of many of Philadelphia's worst-performing schools is to be turned over to seven not-for-profit or for-profit organizations—including the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Edison Schools, and Chancellor-Beacon Schools.

Although other cities have contracted with outside organizations for the management of schools, and many cities, including Philadelphia, have allowed independent charter schools to provide a measure of choice in public education, **no city has come close to Philadelphia in "freeing up" the supply of public schools.** This fall more than a quarter of the 200,000-plus students in Philadelphia will be served by public schools not under the district's direct control.

The importance of Philadelphia's decision cannot be overstated. Philadelphia has struggled to educate its young people. Roughly 60 percent of Philadelphia's students failed the state's reading and math exams, and more than a third dropped out of high school. Three-fourths of the city's schools are identified as low performing, meaning that more than half of a given school's students are failing. Efforts to improve the schools have yielded minimal progress. These statistics are not unique to Philadelphia. Every city in America is grappling with the same problems to some degree.

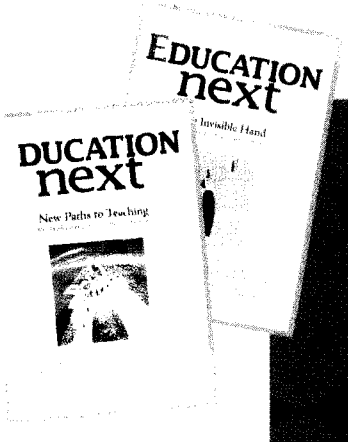
What is unique to Philadelphia is the response. In December 2001, the governor of Pennsylvania and the mayor of Philadelphia agreed to an increase in state funding for Philadelphia's schools and to transfer control of the school district from the local board of education to the SRC. That agreement also outlined plans to privatize a large number of the city's lowest-performing schools. The boldness of this lies not so much in the takeover of the district by the state—states have done this with schools numerous times—but in the takeover of school management by entities other than the state or the district.

During the past decade policymakers became persuaded that schools in general, and particularly schools in large urban systems, will not improve substantially until they are subjected to the pressures of competition. Policymakers recognize that they will never satisfactorily mandate school improvement from above; the school practices that need to change are too numerous and complex to legislate. Competition offers a mechanism that has worked virtually everywhere except education to promote improvements in quality and efficiency.

Competition has not worked in education because it has never really been tried. For the past 150 years public education has been provided by school districts with the exclusive right to operate public schools within their jurisdiction. In recent years policymakers have chipped away at this exclusive right with charter schools and voucher programs. But the Philadelphia story is different—its privatization initiative is large scale. Therein lies a historic opportunity to set a new course for America's public schools and to provide new hope for America's urban youth.

— John E. Chubb

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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Democrats when they were down—switching parties on November 9, the day after the 1994 elections gave Republicans control of Congress.

As an inducement to join the GOP, Shelby was allowed to keep his seniority, and by 1997 he was chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Democrats and editorialists quickly accused him of turning the staid, courtly panel into a staging ground for partisan warfare. Shortly after taking over the committee, Shelby tormented Clinton's nominee for CIA director, Anthony Lake, subjecting him to an ideological grilling that questioned his "integrity" and included questions about Clinton fund-raising and Lake's opinion of Alger Hiss. Several prominent Republicans, including McCain and former CIA chief Robert Gates, defended Lake. But Lake wound up withdrawing his nomination, bitterly declaring that "Washington has gone haywire." Given Shelby's penchant for grudge-bearing, it might have been just as well. When the *Los Angeles Times* asked GOP Senator Arlen Specter during the hearings whether Lake and Shelby might find a way to work together if Clinton's nominee got the job, Specter told the reporter to write that he had laughed out loud.

But Shelby didn't bare his fangs when Clinton offered up Tenet, a former Intelligence Committee aide, in Lake's place. In fact, Shelby praised Tenet as "a man of integrity and professionalism." The relationship soon soured, however. Publicly, Shelby fumed at Tenet's 1998 refusal to his cooperate with his committee's investigation of the transfer of U.S. missile technology to China. Soon afterward he railed against what he called Tenet's lenient response to the revelation that his predecessor at the CIA, John Deutch, had downloaded top secret information onto his personal laptop computer—suggesting Tenet was engaged in a "cover-up." But as with his party switch, personal slights seem to have played a role as well. The senator was reportedly infuriated when, during a 1999 ceremony to rename CIA headquarters, he was seated in a location he deemed insultingly nonprominent—and he blamed Tenet for the affront. "This is a personality thing," says a Democrat familiar with the feud.

Shelby has long been just as suspicious of the FBI. He was particularly critical of the Bureau's handling of the Wen Ho Lee espionage case, suggesting that the FBI was treating Lee—who, it now appears, did little wrong—too leniently. He has repeatedly accused the FBI of stonewalling his committee and was aghast at the agency's disclosure of files related to the Timothy McVeigh case days before McVeigh's execution.

And so when 9/11 hit, Shelby attacked the FBI and the CIA almost immediately, telling John McLaughlin last October, "It's time to have a change of leadership at the top" of the CIA. Representative Porter Goss, the GOP chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, called his comments "inappropriate." Shelby responded by saying that Goss, an ex-CIA agent, was "close to a lot of people over [at the CIA].... I don't think we should be too close to anybody we have oversight of, because you can't do your job." Continuing tension between the two men is said to be delaying the House and Senate Intelligence Committees' joint investigation into 9/11 to this day.

In other words, Shelby may be making the same points as many Democrats, but he's making them for entirely different reasons. Even if he is often driven by personal animus, a lot of what the Alabama senator is saying makes sense: The CIA and the FBI haven't been adequately held accountable for their failings. For the Bush administration, however, the real problem isn't Shelby's words themselves; it's that the press takes his words to mean that even Republicans are growing frustrated with the administration's handling of the 9/11 controversy. But the truth is that Richard Shelby has been frustrated for a long time; it just happens that now people are finally listening. ■

Paris Dispatch

Dead Center

By Jacques Rupnik

Ever since Jacques Chirac routed Jean-Marie Le Pen in the second round of presidential elections roughly one month ago, France has veered between redemption and relief. The "redemption" camp sees in Chirac a hero, a leader who saved the honor of the Republic—as Charles de Gaulle saved France from Vichy in 1940 and again, nearly 20 years later, during the Algerian war. Those inclined toward a less heroic reading of events see his victory as the anticlimactic conclusion to the kind of political psychodrama of which the French are periodically fond. But both narratives are misleading. Chirac is no de Gaulle. And French politics have not returned to normal. In fact, the parliamentary elections scheduled for June 9 and 16 will likely prove an alarming replay of the presidential race: Le Pen's National Front will do well in the first round—by some predictions, it will win the 12.5 percent of the vote necessary to qualify for the second round in one-third of French districts. After this jarring protest vote, National Front candidates will lose almost everywhere in the second round. But by splitting the conservative vote with Chirac's Gaullists, they could hand the Socialists control of parliament. And that means France will once again have a leftist prime minister and a rightist president. In other words, more "cohabitation"—the stagnant, incestuous political arrangement that contributed so mightily to Le Pen's rise in the first place.

In a sense, the problem can be traced to 1986, when then-President François Mitterrand reintroduced proportional representation to the French parliamentary elections in place of the preexisting two-round system—which, by requiring candidates to win a majority of the vote, had generally weeded out extremist parties. Mitterrand's goal was cynical:

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to strengthen Le Pen's far-right National Front in the hope that it would siphon off votes from the respectable right. As a Socialist, Mitterrand had long been handicapped by the strength of the French Communist Party; and he wanted to similarly undermine his conservative opponents. And Le Pen didn't merely undermine the right; he helped provide an identity for the left, which, having renounced the promise of the "radiant future" of socialism, could now at least credibly call itself "anti-fascist." Mitterrand's experiment lasted only two years; in 1988 France returned to a first-past-the-post system for parliamentary elections. But the gambit jump-started the National Front (in 1986 its representation in parliament jumped from ten to 35 seats); and in France's regional assemblies, proportional representation endures to this day, helping Le Pen's party maintain a grassroots base.

BUT SOMETHING EVEN more important happened in 1986: cohabitation. Ever since the birth of the Fifth Republic in 1958, the president and the prime minister had hailed from the same party—which produced a strong French executive. But in 1986 Socialist President Mitterrand saw the right win control of parliament, forcing him to nominate the Gaullist Chirac as prime minister. And since French presidential and parliamentary mandates do not coincide, the result has been that for ten of the last 16 years, the French executive—which comprises both the presidency and the prime ministry—has been divided between rival political forces, functioning as a two-headed monster pulling in opposite directions. Imagine Al Gore in charge of President George W. Bush's administration.

The result, not surprisingly, has been apparent stability combined with stagnation and ineffectiveness. The president attends the Council of Ministers, chaired by his archrival, where policies he does not like—say, the compulsory 35-hour workweek—are adopted. Yet he cannot quite afford to criticize those measures in public since they are the work of "his" government. On the European Union, neither the president nor the prime minister has wanted to leave himself open to charges of giving in too easily to a "federalist" European Commission in Brussels. In recent years the result is that neither (Gaullist) President Chirac nor (Socialist) Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has publicly explained the historical and political value of a common European currency. As a result, successful launch of the "euro," which happened on their watch, has not been sufficiently appreciated by a euro-skeptical French public. And Le Pen has manipulated that euro-skepticism for his own ugly purposes.

And cohabitation has bred more than mere political stalemate. The center-right has cohabited with the center-left so smoothly that basic political identities and responsibilities have become blurred. (The decent "Gaullist" thing to do would have been for the president to resign when he lost his parliamentary majority. But neither Mitterrand in 1986 or 1993, nor Chirac in 1997, did so—even though staying in office meant undermining their authority.) Forced to govern with the right, the left (including a dwindling Communist party) has adopted policies on taxation and the transition to a globalized market economy that are almost indistinguishable from those of its conservative opponents. In fact, under Jospin the government moved further toward privatization than it did under right-wing prime ministers. To some degree, Jospin had no choice. France's need to compete in an age of economic globalization, and the European Union's control of monetary policy, have imposed outside constraints on French governance that have exacerbated the internal constraints of cohabitation. And together they have contributed to a culture of political tinkering.

As the right-left divide has receded, it has been replaced by a divide between the elites and the people. The former tend to speak of "modernity," "flexibility," and "Europe," (meaning privatizing public services and reforming the welfare state and the labor market in line with the rest of the European Union), while the latter—the losers from the above-mentioned policies—grow frustrated at what they see as American-promoted globalization, European integration, and the mainstream political parties that help bring them about. That divide is exacerbated by the inbreeding of the French elite: Its members hail from the same schools and use the same discourse, one largely disconnected from the concerns of underprivileged sections of society. Governments of both the left and the right are packed with graduates of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA)—also known as *énarque*—an insular caste that permeates French politics, business, and the upper ranks of the civil service. To make matters worse, over the last 20 years elitism has been combined with corrupt practices. The end of the Mitterrand era was marred by scandals, the most important involving the Elf oil company, which is now being investigated by the judiciary. Chirac himself avoided being investigated for shady financial dealings during his term as mayor of Paris thanks only to presidential immunity, which he has conveniently, and spectacularly, extended.

NO ISSUE ILLUSTRATES the social divide between French elites and the French public more dramatically than the issue of "insecurity." In the public mind, the most blatant inequality in French society today occurs not in the workplace but at home—between safe, middle-class cities and crime-ridden, ghettoized suburbs. To these real fears of crime Le Pen has skillfully linked imagined fears of immigration. And it is this toxic brew of fear and fantasy that explains how a country that since the nineteenth century has compiled an impressive record of integrating immigrants now faces another election in which a significant minority of its citizenry will vote for an overtly xenophobic party.

To be sure, the politics of fear is not only a French phenomenon. All over Europe, right-wing populists are successfully peddling anti-immigrant, anti-EU agendas. And as in France, many such populists—for instance, Joerg Haider in Austria or the late Pim Fortuyn in Holland—also represent a backlash against long-standing power-sharing arrangements by parties of the mainstream right and left.

What differentiates the various European countries challenged by xenophobic populism is how their mainstream parties—particularly the mainstream parties most tempted by nativism, those on the respectable right—have responded.

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There have been essentially three responses. The first is: "Don't give them a chance"—the effort to foster a patriotic, "democratic nationalist" identity that leaves little room for xenophobes to claim the mantle of nationalism. In the 1980s the most successful practitioners of this strategy were Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl. Who, after all, could claim to be better defenders of the nation than the Iron Lady and the "chancellor of German reunification"? The second option is: "If you can't beat them, join them." That is what Wolfgang Schuessel of Austria's conservative People's Party, Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen of the Liberal Party in Denmark have done: They have brought the populists into coalition governments, thus "civilizing" them or borrowing their agendas, depending on your point of view. The third response has been France's. The Gaullists have admirably eschewed any alliance with Le Pen, but they have also failed to create a compelling, tolerant nationalism that might undermine his support. Instead, they have entered a sterile, semi-permanent governing coalition with the left that has sucked the air of out of mainstream politics and fueled the alienation that is propelling the National Front to ever-greater heights.

HISTORIAN JACQUES JULLIARD has said, "Elitism is democracy without the people. Populism is the people without democracy." And in France today, they are feeding off one another to a worrying degree. It's not just that Le Pen won 17 percent of the vote last month and that National Front candidates will likely do almost as well in the parliamentary first round next week; but in that first round of presidential balloting, three Trotskyite candidates combined to garner another 11 percent. In other words, the French electorate was split in roughly three parts: one-third for the mainstream parties; one-third for right- and left-wing radicals; and almost one-third abstaining. This was, by any standard, a massive vote of no confidence in the political class.

It may not be too much to say that we are witnessing the death of the Fifth Republic. France's current constitution, sometimes dubbed "the Republican monarchy," was born in 1958 in response to the ineffectiveness of the weak, fragmented, and unstable Fourth Republic, whose average government lasted about six months. The Fifth was supposed to fix these problems by strengthening the presidency: The president, who had been chosen by parliament, would be directly elected. And the president would be further strengthened by his ability to choose a prime minister of his own party, as long as that party controlled parliament. For a quarter-century, first with the Gaullists in control of an undivided executive from 1958 to 1981, and then with Mitterrand's Socialists in unambiguous control from 1981 to 1986, the system worked.

But now, after a decade and a half of cohabitation and the extremist vote that it has helped spawn, the old disease is back: a weakened, divided executive and a fragmented political scene. Chirac has responded to Le Pen's success by saying he will not ally himself with the extreme right's candidates or its policies. This may be the moral position to take. But it will likely guarantee pro-Le Pen candidates entrance into the parliamentary second round, where they can exact revenge on Chirac by splitting his vote. What's more, Le Pen's success has mobilized the left, just as Mitterrand always hoped it would. At the May Day celebrations in Paris last month, youthful demonstrators chanted, "First we oust the fascist, then the crook"—meaning Chirac. The combination of another strong National Front showing and a strong showing by the left could deny Chirac a majority in parliament—and produce a Socialist prime minister. In other words, cohabitation with a vengeance.

For the Socialists, that might seem an impressive achievement. But if the left's current mobilization simply produces another round of divided executive power, it could be a Pyrrhic victory. If France is to escape its current crisis, today's anti-Le Pen civic upsurge must be channeled not into the illusory recovery of power, but into the rediscovery of the fundamentals of political debate. In his reflections on *The Liberty of the Ancients compared to that of the Moderns*, Benjamin Constant contrasts the ideal of democratic participation with the liberal, modern concept of enjoyment of individual freedom and interests. Perhaps before embarking on another cohabitation bound to reinforce the "modern" pursuit of particular interests, apathy, and shrinking public space, the French left might usefully reflect on its own role in the present crisis, and thus help recreate the conditions for something France has not seen in a very long time: politics as a meaningful contest over the definition of the public good. ■

Gaza Dispatch

Trials and Error

By DAN EPHRON

FEW PALESTINIANS ARE more keenly aware of the corruption and repression of Yasir Arafat's administration than is Raji Sourani. As Gaza's premiere human rights lawyer, Sourani has seen his countrymen arrested arbitrarily, beaten in captivity, held for months without trial, and denied the right to a basic defense in court. He's also been targeted himself: When the 48-year-old jurist spoke out against the injustice of the Palestinian State Security Courts in 1995, Arafat had him arrested and later fired from his job as director of a local human rights group. But nothing seems more duplicitous to Sourani than the pressure the United States and Israel are now imposing on the Palestinian Authority to democratize. "It's hypocritical," he says, in the spacious office of the new human rights group he formed after his arrest and firing. "They pushed for these repressive measures from day one."

In the wake of last month's destruction of much of Arafat's governmental infrastructure by the Israeli army, Palestinians

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are demanding structural reforms more vocally than ever. So are Israel and the United States. CIA Chief George Tenet is working on a blueprint for reshuffling Palestinian security agencies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and may travel to the region in June. Israeli officials have signaled they would allow new elections, long sought by Palestinian lawmakers, if Palestinian violence subsides enough to allow Israeli troops to pull back. Speaking to Israel's parliament this month, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said, "Israel will enter negotiations immediately after fulfillment of two conditions: the total cessation of terror, incitement, and violence; second, reforms in the Palestinian Authority." And though Arafat initially resisted calls for change, he now pays at least lip service to the idea.

BUT WHILE ISRAELIS now call democratization a precondition for a new peace process, many Palestinians believe it was the Israelis themselves, during years of peacemaking, who encouraged the very repression they're now condemning. The Oslo accords, which framed Palestinian-Israel relations from 1993 until the Al Aqsa intifada erupted 20 months ago, were supposed to provide land for Palestinians and security for Israel, in part by empowering Arafat to crack down on his militant rivals. But Arafat did so only intermittently; and as a result, Israeli and American officials frequently pressed him to use harsher measures. One month after signing the accord in Washington, then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin explained to critics that Arafat would be better suited than Israel to fight terrorists because he was unencumbered by the props of democracy—human rights groups, the supreme court, and "all kinds of bleeding-heart liberals." Israeli press reports have described how Israel helped Arafat's cronies gain monopolies over the import of cement and other staples, thus fueling corruption. And in a 1995 visit to the region Vice President Al Gore praised Arafat for establishing the State Security Courts—military-style tribunals where defendants have fewer rights than they do in the civilian criminal justice system—in order to deal with Hamas, the Islamic extremist group that never accepted Oslo.

Arafat's Security Courts are widely loathed among Palestinians. The Palestinian Bar Association, along with many local human rights lawyers, boycotts them. And with good reason. Israel and the United States pushed the courts because they provided a way for the Palestinian Authority to jail Hamas militants quickly, without much real evidence or due process. But Arafat quickly expanded their jurisdiction, allowing them to prosecute drug dealers, white-collar criminals, and, most ironically of all, suspected collaborators with Israel. Ismail Abu Shanab, one of Hamas's more talkative leaders in the Gaza Strip, says the first Palestinian convicted in a Security Court was fellow Hamas militant Sayyed Abu Musameh. But Musameh wasn't convicted of terrorism; he was sentenced to two years in prison for political activities that "undermin[ed] the Palestinian Authority." Since his conviction, the Security Courts have tried hundreds of other Palestinians—with not a single acquittal. And of those convicted, only about 50 have ties to Hamas.

One of the few Palestinian officials still willing to defend this record is Khaled al-Kidra, the attorney general for the State Security Courts. I first met Kidra more than one year ago at the trial of Majdi Makawi, a Palestinian accused of helping Israel assassinate a top Hamas militant. Kidra acted as chief prosecutor in the trial, delivering a sonorous polemic—rich in emotion but short on convictable detail—against the scourge of collaborators and calling on judges to impose the death sentence "swiftly and decisively." (Since the renewed fighting erupted 20 months ago, Palestinian Security Courts have tried dozens of people as collaborators.) The trial was held at a Gaza security compound (since destroyed in an Israeli air strike), where an official banner honoring the Palestinian chairman welcomed guests to "ARAFAT'S POLICE CITY." The small room in which the trial took place was packed with policemen and family members of the dead Hamas man. The three judges wore military uniforms. Makawi, the defendant, was dressed in dirty sweatpants and flip-flops. His court-appointed attorney spoke only twice, called no witness, and raised no objections. The chief witness for the prosecution was a police interrogator who read aloud "evidence" from an article in the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* that described the Israeli assassination but made no mention of Makawi himself. The trial, conducted in two sessions over the course of a Thursday, lasted a total of four hours. After the judge read the guilty verdict, authorities promised me a jail-cell interview with Makawi the following Sunday. But Saturday night he was taken before a firing squad and shot dead.

INTERESTINGLY, IT HAS often been right-wing Israelis who have voiced uneasiness with this type of justice. Natan Sharansky, Israeli housing minister and erstwhile Russian dissident, warned throughout the Oslo years that it was a mistake to encourage Arafat to suppress basic rights, even if the aim—destroying Hamas—was legitimate. "There was a feeling that if Israel helped make Arafat into a strong leader—a dictator, really—that he could deliver on peace and security," Sharansky says now. "I said from the start that it would backfire." Sharansky's theories on peace and democracy are rooted in the misery of his Soviet experience: A democratic Palestinian leader, he insists, will try to deliver peace in order to win the support of his people. A dictator, by contrast, will make Israel its perennial enemy to deflect attention from his own corruption. "Dictators need enemies to rally their people. That was always the case in the Soviet Union. Dictators don't make peace," he says. In a plan he presented last month to Sharon, Sharansky suggests that the international community help Palestinians develop democratic institutions before Israel embarks on new peace talks.

But Raji Sourani is deeply cynical about initiatives like Sharansky's, largely because Israel failed to support democracy and human rights in the Palestinian territories during its decades of rule in the West Bank and Gaza. When Palestinian police arrested him for opposing Arafat in 1995, Sourani says it was a bewildering moment. "I never liked the Oslo accord, but I believed—dreamed, maybe—that it would lead to democracy here," he says now. Sourani and three million other Palestinians are still waiting. ■

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Why the Bushies won't push democracy in the Middle East.

Return Address

By LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

EXACTLY 20 YEARS ago, on June 8, 1982, President Ronald Reagan delivered an address to the British Parliament that has since become known as the Westminster Speech. In it, he predicted that the decisive factor in the cold war would "not be bombs and rockets, but a test of wills and ideas." The United States, he declared, must help other nations "foster the infrastructure of democracy—the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities—which allows a people to choose their own way." Today, with the United States engaged in a new war of ideas, some in the Bush administration (most notably former Reagan aide Elliot Abrams) have been pressing for the president to deliver a speech timed for the twentieth anniversary of Westminster. The hope is that George W. Bush, like Reagan before him, will restate what has been a war against "evildoers" and "evil ones" in affirmative terms, that he will recast the war on terrorism as a war for liberty.

Alas, the hope appears to be in vain. Although drafts have already been written, the anniversary speech will not be delivered. Partly, Bush aides note, that's because the president already framed the war on terrorism as one of ideas in his January State of the Union address, in which he declared that "America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women, private property, free speech, equal justice, and religious tolerance." But there's another, less-edifying reason that a second Westminster speech won't work: Bush can't portray the war on terrorism as a war for liberty, because in its most important theater—the Arab world—it's not. When it comes to the Middle East, this administration still upholds a decades-old bargain: Arab tyrants provide the United States with oil and basing rights and purport to keep Islamic radicals in check; in return, the United States turns a blind eye to the depredations they inflict on their citizens.

In fairness, Bush is following in his predecessors' footsteps. Reagan never promoted democracy in the Middle East. Neither did the first Bush administration—even in Kuwait, a country American soldiers died to liberate. For its part, Bill Clinton's team proceeded on the assumption that, as his Middle East point man Martin Indyk recalled in a recent *Foreign Affairs* article, "Moderate Arab states would provide the U.S. military with access to bases and facilities...; in return, Washington would not exert significant pressure for domestic change." And today the Bush Cabinet honors the agreement as well, even though last fall it helped bring murder to our shores.

Beneath the Cabinet, however, September 11 has prompted another look. A growing chorus at the State Department and the Pentagon argues that, far from serving our national security interests, America's support for Arab dictators has become a liability. They note that not only has Arab repression fueled Islamist movements and anti-American extremism, but that the very regimes we have been propping up have directly encouraged these forces as a way to deflect popular anger from their palace gates. Rather than choose between dictators and theocrats, then, the search is on in the bureaucracy for a third force: Arab democrats.

As it happens, many of the officials making these arguments made similar ones two decades ago, when they pushed to enshrine democracy promotion as a centerpiece of America's battle against Soviet communism—and, as part of that effort, pushed to democratize even "friendly," right-wing dictatorships. With the war on terror, they have picked up where they left off in the 1980s—arguing that the United States is engaged in a war of ideas, not just a war. Abrams, now senior director for democracy, human rights, and international operations at the National Security Council (NSC)—whose well-publicized efforts to oust left-wing dictators in Latin America during the Reagan years were accompanied by less-heralded efforts to oust right- wing dictators in countries like Chile and Paraguay—and Lorne Craner, the Bush team's assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights, and labor as well as a longtime democracy activist, have been pressing the issue ever since 9/11. So has Paula Dobriansky, the undersecretary of state for global affairs and another of the Reagan administration's key democracy promoters. She claims that those who argue democracy "is not realistic in the Muslim world have not been listening to Muslim politicians, civil society leaders, academics, and religious authorities who are increasingly arguing that it is not only possible, indeed it is essential." From the Pentagon, Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith—another Reaganite—has also tried to draw attention to the Arab world's democracy deficit, particularly among Israel's neighbors. So has Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, who pushed the Reagan administration—successfully—to promote democracy in the Philippines and South Korea, and who pushed the first Bush administration—unsuccessfully—to promote it in the Arab world. In fact, just four weeks ago he delivered a speech on the topic, in which he singled out Morocco and Northern Iraq's Kurdish enclave as models for democratic progress in the region.

Coming from a Reaganite idealist like Wolfowitz, the sentiment is nothing new. Coming from an orthodox "realist"

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like State Department Policy Planning Director Richard Haass, however, it is. Nonetheless, several of the Bush team's mid-ranking devotees of realpolitik have modified their positions, including Haass—who only last year argued in an appearance at the Council on Foreign Relations that the United States had no business democratizing the Arab world. They argue that exporting democracy to the Middle East is no longer just a moral imperative; it's a strategic one. In the aftermath of September 11 Haass convened an interagency meeting at the State Department, billed to discuss democratizing the Arab world. The "old bargain," he announced, had fallen apart—what had previously been an Arab problem had become an American one. And while staffers in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs resist this new talk of democratizing their clients—invoking the Iranian experience, where theocracy, not secular democracy, followed the demise of a pro-American autocrat—its top official, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs William Burns, has collaborated closely with Craner on the issue.

WHAT HAS THIS mid-level consensus produced? So far, mostly policy reviews. But there have been some firsts as well. While the Bush team's Madison Avenue advertising exec-cum-undersecretary of state for public diplomacy, Charlotte Beers, has been busy flacking "the brand 'the United States,'" the board of governors that runs Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia has launched a more sober (and effective) public diplomacy initiative: Radio Sawa. In addition to employing newly built antennae and satellites to bring accurate and fair news coverage to a region not known for either, Norman Pattiz, chairman of the committee that oversees the network, says Radio Sawa will "try to pinpoint and refute misinformation in the state-controlled media." (Pattiz credits Abrams as the program's most vocal champion on the Bush team.) Along the same lines, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) plans to funnel more resources to organizations pressing for democracy in the Arab world, particularly in Yemen and Northern Iraq. And for the first time Craner's State Department operation intends to do the same. Craner plans to focus on those Arab monarchies—Jordan, Morocco, Bahrain, and Qatar—that have been making fitful but unmistakable moves toward political liberalization. Foggy Bottom's policy-planning office has also been reviewing aid programs in the Middle East; and absent a presidential address on the Westminster anniversary, the administration's democracy boosters hope a lesser official will give a speech in July on freedom and the Arab world. "The idea is to encourage the monarchies moving forward," says a State Department official, "and then turn to the Saudis and the Egyptians and say 'What are *you* doing?'"

Elsewhere, the ideas aren't so clear. In next year's budget, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will receive the bulk of democracy-program funds for the Middle East; and as proof of their commitment to democracy promotion, administration officials point to the 10 percent boost in spending they have proposed for the agency. But most of that money will go to traditional development programs that have nothing to do with democracy promotion. Indeed, USAID and its chairman, Andrew Natsios—who has skirmished repeatedly with the Bush team's democracy boosters—retains a decidedly pre-9/11 outlook. This is particularly true of the agency's Middle East programs, many of which promote "democracy" only in the loosest sense of the term. That's because USAID works *with* governments, not against them. In Egypt, for instance—where USAID spends more than in any other Arab country—democracy programs must first be approved by a regime that routinely violates the tenets of democracy itself.

In other words, the ideological weapons being employed in the war on terror's most important battlefield—a radio station, $10 million in grants, and an incremental boost in foreign aid—amount to considerably less than the sum of their parts. Again, the contrast with the Reagan administration is telling. Following the Westminster speech in 1982, the administration unveiled Project Democracy, a catalogue of interagency programs that culminated in the creation of NED in 1984. Reagan's team also enlisted business and labor leaders to push for democracy abroad; exploited crises across the globe to the same end; and most importantly, never stopped talking about the topic. And there's a reason: Support for democracy promotion came from the top—from Secretary of State George Schultz, the NSC, and the president himself.

IN THE BUSH administration, the reverse is true. "Senior administration officials have not yet supplied a coherent democracy-promotion strategy for the Middle East," says Thomas Carothers, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "even though we have been working closely with non-democratic governments there." And without direction from the top, the different branches of government have each gone their own way. Wolfowitz's speech on democracy and Islam, for example, didn't signal a new administration strategy; it signaled a Wolfowitz strategy—though cleared by the NSC, the speech reflected his ideas and was delivered at his initiative. Elsewhere, fights have broken out among sub-Cabinet-level officials—over whether to allow Egypt to participate in a meeting this November of the American-led Community of Democracies and over which, if any, Arab states meet the qualifications for reform-dependent aid. At the White House, meanwhile, senior officials claim democracy-promotion efforts in the Middle East might not coalesce into a strategy at all. Nor do they envision a speech—by the president or anyone else—setting one out. "On an issue like this," notes one official, "the initiative has to come from the top down, and right now it's just not a priority." Ambassador Mark Palmer, a former Reagan administration official who helped draft his Westminster speech, says, "It's striking that the White House has been clear in saying even China should be a democracy, but has been unwilling to say it hopes for the same thing in Jordan, Egypt, or Morocco."

But it's not that striking. While they have nothing against democracy promotion, the Kissingerian sensibilities of Bush's top diplomatic counselors run directly counter to those of the Reaganites beneath them. Neither Condoleezza

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Rice nor Colin Powell viewed the cold war as a war of ideas, and neither views the war on terror as one. "September eleventh and its aftermath," Rice said in a little-noticed but telling speech last month, "illuminated a fundamental divide between the forces of chaos and those of order." And in a conflict between chaos and order—as opposed to a conflict between freedom and oppression—Washington and the Arab world's autocrats sit on the same side. Rice's speech harked back to the cold war, which she also viewed through the lens of order as a protégé in the first Bush administration of über-realist Brent Scowcroft—who found it "painful to watch Yeltsin rip the Soviet Union brick by brick away from Gorbachev." More recently, in a *Foreign Affairs* article she published during the 2000 campaign, Rice wrote that the promotion of American values is best achieved through a favorable balance of power, not the other way around. "But sometimes that favorable balance of power takes time to achieve, both internationally and within a society. And in the meantime, it is simply not possible to ignore and isolate other powerful states that do not share those values." Nor, according to administration officials, has Rice been eager to challenge those in the Middle East who do not share our values.

As for Powell, although State Department officials say he has been receptive to ideas about democracy promotion in the Arab world, White House officials say that hasn't translated into his actually advocating them. Nor has he ever done so in the past. Indeed, his autobiography drips with contempt for the idealists he served with in both the Reagan and Clinton administrations, stressing instead that the United States should focus on the "cold calculus of national interest." Hence, Powell scoffed at the notion that "if Saddam had fallen, he would necessarily have been replaced by a Jeffersonian in some sort of desert democracy where people read the Federalist Papers along with the Koran." By contrast, he waxes lyrical about the virtues of the Saudi regime, which, in Senate testimony last month, he hailed as "a solid friend of the United States, a supplier to the United States of oil, and . . . a reliable supplier for most of the past sixty years." What's more, Powell has argued privately that a strategy of pressing too hard for Palestinian political reform may backfire.

THAT STRATEGY, AS it happens, comes largely from Vice President Dick Cheney. Pressed to explain Cheney's view of democracy promotion in the Arab world, one Bush adviser laughed, "Dick's not the crusading type." Cheney may have earned a reputation during the '80s as one of Capitol Hill's staunchest anti-Communists, but in the aftermath of the cold war—and more importantly, the Gulf war—he picked up a reputation as something else: an oil-industry CEO, an advocate of engaging Libya and Iran, and the Saudis' go-to guy on the Bush team. "The good Lord," Cheney declared in 1998, "didn't see fit to put oil and gas only where there are democratically elected regimes friendly to the United States." As for his advocacy of Palestinian reform, it's a laudable tactic to club Yasir Arafat. But it's hard to take seriously rhetoric admonishing the Palestinians to undertake political reforms and govern "in a way that's comparable to others," in the words of State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher, when the "others" around them are mostly dictators whom the United States (and Cheney) supports. As for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, he may be a hawk, but unlike his aides Wolfowitz and Feith, he's hardly a democratic idealist. Pentagon officials argue that Rumsfeld's immediate concern is the robust prosecution of the military half of the war on terror, and that he believes a democratic Iraq will be a powerful agent for change in the Middle East. But that's really another way of making Rice's point that the spread of democracy is a second-order effect of geopolitics.

AS FOR THE president himself, he has no cold war record to draw on. But he has never seemed entirely comfortable with the idea of exporting democracy, which he seems to view as a cousin to nation-building. On the campaign trail, he repeatedly boasted that his own foreign policy, unlike Clinton's, would focus on "vital national interests." And his tough-guy critiques of Clintonian moralism often shaded into contempt for democracy itself. "The new Pakistani general, he's just been elected—not elected, this guy took over office," Bush said of coup leader Pervez Musharraf during the infamous name-the-president-of-Pakistan ambush. "It appears this guy is going to bring stability to the country, and I think that's good news for the subcontinent." In the Middle East, too, Bush's public pronouncements have put a premium on "stability"—particularly in Saudi Arabia, where the Arab bargain that Bush has renewed has brought us unspeakable misery. Indeed, even the administration's democracy promoters never broach the idea of pressing Riyadh to liberalize. "We're scared to death of the Saudis," says a senior administration official, "and even more scared of what could come next." Nor has Crown Prince Abdullah been shy about reminding the president of the identity of his potential successors. In a letter to Bush last year, he threatened that if the United States failed to acknowledge its sensitivities, the Saudi regime could "suffer the fate of the Shah of Iran."

But during the cold war, when the risks were at least as great as they are now, the Reagan administration devised a way to further democracy from El Salvador to the Philippines without bringing its foes to power. Then, as now, skeptics cautioned that the devil we knew was safer than the alternative, that democracy was ill-suited to non-Western cultures, and that interest and morality were inherently incompatible. They were wrong. And there is no reason to take their admonitions any more seriously today. After all, no one at the State Department or the Pentagon is talking about democratizing Arab countries overnight. What they are encouraging is movement toward the rule of law, governmental transparency, pluralism, and other forms of liberalization. They are doing so because September 11 showed that whatever the risks of a new bargain with the Arab world, the risks of the old bargain have become much, much steeper than previously thought. Pretending otherwise isn't evidence of realism, and promoting democracy in the Middle East isn't about Clintonian "social work." Nor is it about national egoism. It is about national survival. That Arab governments need to be convinced of this point may be understandable. That the White House needs to be is incomprehensible. ■

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The peculiar duplicity of Ari Fleischer.

Defense Secretary

By JONATHAN CHAIT

ARI FLEISCHER, THE White House press secretary, is famous. But I knew him back when he was merely infamous, as chief Republican spokesman on the House Ways and Means Committee. He spoke with a cool, quick certainty, unhindered by any sense of conscience. A profile in *GQ*—not many Hill staffers receive such attention—dubbed him the "flack out of hell."

The typical press secretary shovels out fairly blunt propaganda, the kind reporters can spot a mile away and sidestep easily. But Fleischer has a way of blindsiding you, leaving you disoriented and awestruck. Once, about six years ago, I called to ask him something about tax reform. Knowing Fleischer, I tried to anticipate his possible replies and map out countermeasures to cut off his escape routes. I began the conversation by bringing up what seemed a simple premise: His boss, Bill Archer, favored replacing the income tax with a national sales tax. Fleischer immediately interrupted to insist that Archer did not support any such thing. I was dumbfounded. Forgetting my line of questioning, I frantically tried to recall how it was I knew that Archer had advocated a sales tax. But in the face of this confident assertion, my mind went blank. "Wha ... uh, really?" I stammered. He assured me it was true. Completely flustered, I thanked him and hung up. I rummaged through my files, trying to piece together my reality. Didn't everybody who followed these things know that Archer favored a sales tax? Yes—here was one newspaper story, and another, and finally a crinkled position paper, authored by Bill Archer, explaining why we needed a national sales tax. *Of course* he favored it. Fleischer had made the whole thing up.

Most press secretaries "spin." Spin is a clever, lawyerly art, often performed with a knowing wink, which involves casting your boss's actions in the most favorable light. Practitioners of spin don't deny generally accepted facts or contest a reporter's right to ask questions. Rather, they emphasize alternative facts as a way of establishing the difference between what their boss is perceived to have done and what he or she actually did. During the Clinton administration, spin came to symbolize everything reporters loathed about what they saw as a too-clever-by-half presidency. *The Washington Post*'s Howard Kurtz, in his book *Spin Cycle*, describes Bill Clinton's spinsters as trying "to defend the indefensible," by, for instance, insisting that White House coffees with donors were not "fund-raisers" because the money was raised beforehand.

But what Fleischer does, for the most part, is not really spin. It's a system of disinformation—blunter, more aggressive, and, in its own way, more impressive than spin. Much of the time Fleischer does not engage with the logic of a question at all. He simply denies its premises—or refuses to answer it on the grounds that it conflicts with a Byzantine set of rules governing what questions he deems appropriate. Fleischer has broken new ground in the dark art of flackdom: Rather than respond tendentiously to questions, he negates them altogether.

I. THE AUDACIOUS FIB

Like any skilled craftsman, Fleischer has a variety of techniques at his disposal. The first is the one he used to such great effect at Ways and Means: He cuts off the question with a blunt, factual assertion. Sometimes the assertion is an outright lie; sometimes it's on the edge. But in either case the intent is to deceive—to define a legitimate question as based on false premises and, therefore, illegitimate. Fleischer does this so well, in part because of his breathtaking audacity: Rather than tell a little fib—i.e., attacking the facts most open to interpretation in a reporter's query—he often tells a big one, challenging the question in a way the reporter could not possibly anticipate. Then there's his delivery: Fleischer radiates boundless certainty, recounting even his wildest fibs in the matter-of-fact, slightly patronizing tone you would use to explain, say, the changing of the seasons to a child. He neither under-emotes (which would appear robotic) nor over-emotes (which would appear defensive) but seems at all times so natural that one wonders if somehow he has convinced himself of his own untruths.

One month ago, for example, a reporter cited the administration's recent plan to build an education, health, and welfare infrastructure in Afghanistan and asked Fleischer when George W. Bush—who during the campaign repeatedly bad-mouthed nation-building—had come around to the idea. A lesser flack would have given the obvious, spun response: The Bush administration's policies in Afghanistan don't constitute nation-building for reasons X, Y, and Z. The reporter might have expected that reply and prepared a follow-up accordingly. But Fleischer went the other way, bluntly asserting that Bush had never derided nation-building to begin with. "The president has always been for those," Fleischer said. The questioner, likely caught off guard, repeated, "He's always been for..." when Fleischer interjected, "Do you have any evidence to the contrary?" In fact, Bush had denounced nation-building just as unambiguously as Archer had endorsed the national sales tax. "I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation-building," said candidate Bush in the second presi-

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dential debate, to take one of many examples. The offending reporter, of course, didn't have any of these quotes handy at the press conference, and so Fleischer managed to extinguish the nation-building queries.

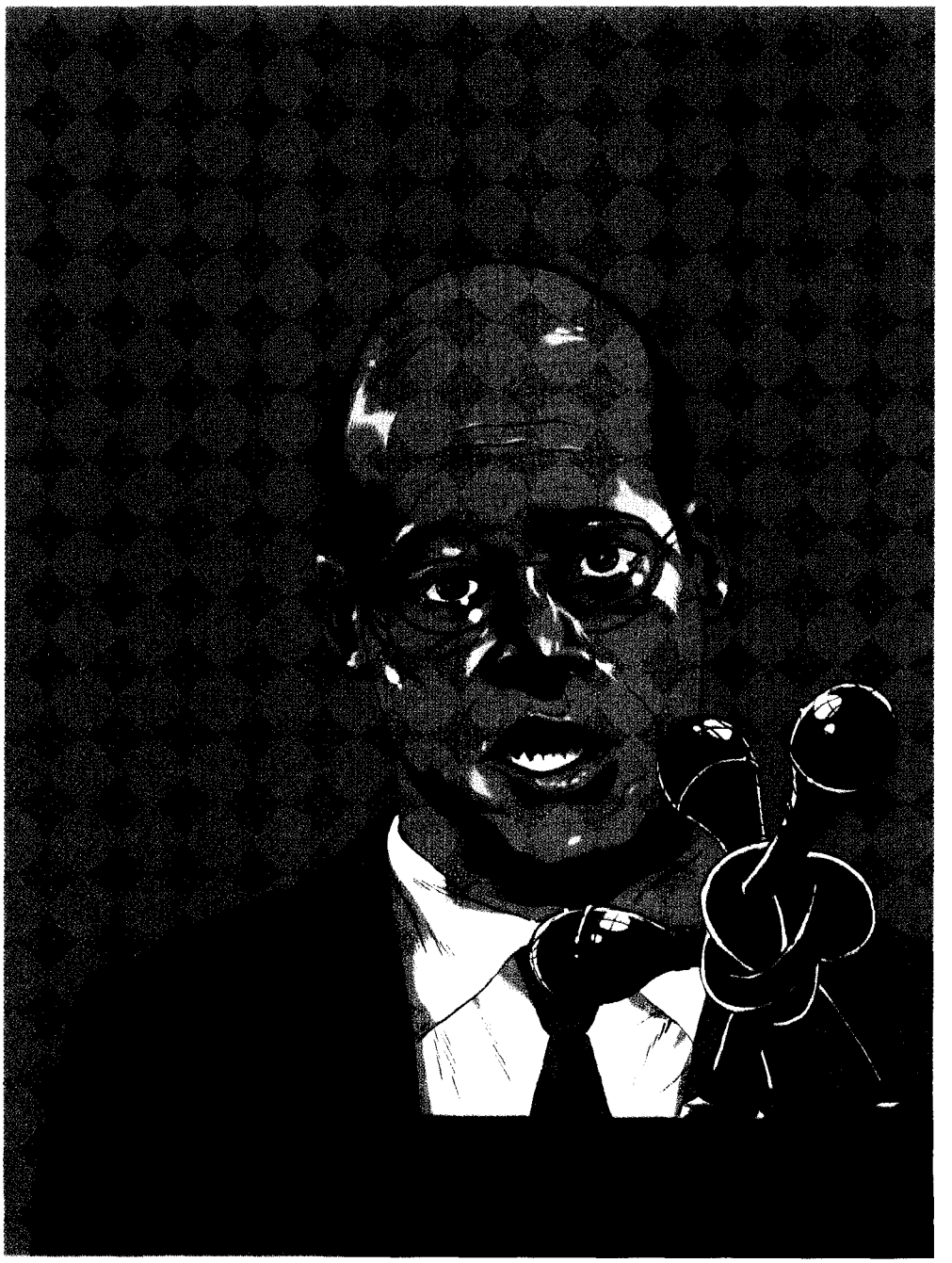
To take another example, after the coup in Venezuela last month, Fleischer announced that "it happened in a very quick fashion as a result of the message of the Venezuelan people." But once the coup was reversed, the administration's seeming support proved embarrassing. So at the next press conference, a reporter asked Fleischer, "Last Friday, you said that it—the seizure of power illegitimately in Venezuela—'happened in a very quick fashion as a result of the message of the Venezuelan people'; that the seizure of power, extraconstitutionally, that is, dissolution of the congress and the supreme court happened as a result of the message of the Venezuelan people."

Fleischer could have acknowledged the underlying fact—that the Bush administration initially endorsed the coup—but then expressed regret at its anti-democratic turn, a turn that the United States presumably opposed and perhaps even tried to prevent. Instead, he replied, "No, that's not what I said." And indeed, it wasn't *exactly* what he said—after quoting Fleischer verbatim reacting to the coup, the reporter went on to describe some of the things that happened after the coup. And that gave Fleischer his opening: "The dissolution that you just referred to did not take place until later Friday afternoon," he noted. "It could not possibly be addressed in my briefing because it hadn't taken place yet." By focusing on the latter, subordinate part of the reporter's question, Fleischer negated the verbatim quote of his earlier remarks—and thus neatly cut off discussion of the administration's early reaction to news of the coup.

The problem with this tactic is that it's always possible to get caught in an outright lie. Speaking to reporters on the morning of February 28, for instance, Fleischer said of Middle East peace negotiations under Clinton: "As a result of an attempt to push the parties beyond where they were willing to go, that led to expectations that were raised to such a high level that it turned to violence." The story went out that the administration blamed Middle East violence on its predecessor's peacemaking. That afternoon, Fleischer insisted he had said no such thing. "That's a mischaracterization of what I said," he protested. But Fleischer's earlier statement was too fresh in the press corps's mind to simply deny, and the press continued to hound him. Later in the day he was forced to issue a statement of regret.

What this episode illustrates is that stating unambiguous falsehoods carries certain risks—and no press secretary can afford to have his factual accuracy repeatedly challenged by the press. So while Fleischer may employ this tactic more frequently than most press secretaries, it is still relatively rare—the p.r. equivalent of a trick play in football: While spectacular to behold and often successful, more frequent usage would dilute its effectiveness and risk disaster.

The greater feat is to put yourself in a position where you don't *have* to lie. This can be accomplished in lots of ways—



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spinning is the preferred approach for most flacks, but that isn't Fleischer's style; candor, obviously, is out of the question. Fleischer's method of choice is question-avoidance. After all, you can't be accused of answering a question untruthfully if you haven't answered it at all.

II. The Process Non Sequitur

Fleischer has two ways of not answering a question. The first is the non sequitur, a banal statement that, though related to the general topic, sheds no light upon the question at hand. Here, again, Fleischer is an innovator: Whereas most spinners abhor questions about legislative process and try to turn them into questions about their boss's beliefs, Fleischer excels at turning specific questions about Bush's beliefs and intentions into remedial-level civics-class descriptions of process. For example, asked last month if Bush would sign an energy bill that didn't include new drilling in Alaska, here was Fleischer's response in full: "Again, the process, as you know, is the House passes a bill, the Senate passes a bill. And we'll go to conference and try to improve the bill from what the Senate passed. The purpose of energy legislation is to make America more energy-independent. And that's the goal of the conference, in the president's opinion." Will Bush sign a campaign finance bill that doesn't restrict union dues? Fleischer's reply in full: "The president is looking forward to working together to bring people together so he can sign a bill."

At his best, Fleischer can fasten together clumps of non sequiturs into an elaborate web of obfuscation. Last year Bush persuaded GOP Representative Charlie Norwood to back off his own patients' bill of rights just before the other co-sponsors held a press conference, effectively splitting up a bipartisan coalition. Yet patients' rights was popular, and Bush wanted to present himself as supporting the bill he had just scuttled. The task of disseminating this message fell to Fleischer, and the result was inspired. The transcript of that afternoon's press conference reads like dialogue from a David Mamet film:

> Fleischer: [W]e're going to be prepared to work with a number of people to get it done.
>
> Q: You would work with the people, including the ones who put the bill forward today? Why won't you work with them?
>
> Fleischer: Absolutely. Absolutely we will.
>
> Q: So why are you asking lawmakers not to go with them, to stay with us?
>
> Fleischer: Again, I think the president is just in a position now where we want to begin the process, begin this year working directly with some of the more influential people who have been part of the patients' bill of rights in the past, and we'll continue to do that.

A few minutes later Fleischer stated, "We view what's happening today on the Hill"— that is, the press conference Bush had pressured Norwood to abandon—"as very helpful to the process." But, a reporter asked, "If it's helpful ... why was Norwood asked not to attend today's event?" Fleischer explained, "I think congressmen decide every day whether they want to co-sponsor bills or not co-sponsor bills." His purpose in this exercise was not to make the press corps see Bush's side of the argument, or even to make any argument at all, but simply to befuddle them with non sequitur nonsense until they ran out of questions.

III. The Rules

After the non sequitur, the other kind of non-answer is more straightforward: the open refusal to reply. This is tricky business. A press secretary, after all, is supposed to provide information to the press, not deny it. The straight rebuff, then, must be couched in terms of some broader principle. And it is here that Fleischer's particular genius is on clearest display. As press secretary, Fleischer has developed a complex, arbitrary, and constantly shifting set of rules governing what questions he can answer. If a reporter's question can be answered simply by reciting talking points about process, Fleischer will comply. If he can't, he will find a way to rule it out of order.

Fleischer declines to answer any question he deems "hypothetical." This, too, is a common press-secretary tactic, but Fleischer has a talent for finding hypotheticals buried in what would seem to be extremely concrete questions. Earlier this year, for example, the administration praised an Arab League resolution supporting the Saudi peace plan, but dismissed as irrelevant a resolution condemning a possible U.S. attack on Iraq. A reporter asked why one Arab League resolution mattered but the other didn't. "I'm not going to speculate about plans that the president has said that he has made no decisions on and have not crossed his desk," Fleischer replied. "That wasn't my question," the reporter retorted. Fleischer insisted: "You're asking about an attack on Iraq, and the president has said repeatedly that he has no plans and nothing has crossed his desk. So that enters into the area of hypothetical." Fleischer redefined a question about something that had happened—the Arab League resolution—into a question about something that hadn't—a U.S. attack on Iraq—and then dismissed the latter as hypothetical.

Perhaps the easiest way for Fleischer to dismiss questions is to suggest that he is not the appropriate person to answer them—something he does with remarkable promiscuity. Do the administration and Pakistan agree on extraditing the killers of Daniel Pearl? "You'd have to ask Pakistan," Fleischer replied on February 25. Did Israel's offensive in the West Bank enhance its security? "That's a judgment for Israel to make," he said on April 16. In short, if a question can be said to pertain to another country, that discharges the White House from having to state an opinion.

Fleischer uses the same technique for discussions of domestic policy. Does the administration want Congress to move ahead with campaign finance reform? "The president does not determine the Senate schedule," Fleischer explained on March 19. "The Senate leadership determines the Senate schedule." (That hasn't stopped the White House from demanding the Senate take up other legislation on numerous occasions.) Does an anti-administration court ruling strengthen the U.S. General Accounting Office's case for demanding energy documents? "That's for the courts to judge, not for me," Fleischer demurred on February 28. What about the recent decision by Stanley Works to relocate

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to Bermuda, which several members of Congress condemned? "I can't comment on any one individual corporate action." Indeed, Fleischer will even pawn off questions involving other branches of the Bush administration. Asked this spring whether Army Secretary Thomas White has lived up to the standards Bush set out after Enron, Fleischer answered, "Anything particular to Enron, I would refer you to the Department of Justice." What sort of access did GOP donors get to White House officials at a recent fund-raiser? Ask the Republican National Committee, replied Fleischer. Has Colin Powell met with Ariel Sharon? Ask the State Department. Did the administration intervene to allow more pollutants in Alabama? Ask the Environmental Protection Agency. And so on.

WHEN QUESTIONS CANNOT be fobbed off on other departments, Fleischer often rephrases them to make them seem so complex and esoteric that he couldn't possibly be expected to answer them. Asked two weeks ago to comment on a blockbuster quote by Bush counterterrorism official Richard Clarke prominently featured in a front-page *Washington Post* story, he replied, "I do not receive a daily briefing on his verbatim quotes." One year ago Fleischer listed six members of Congress who would appear at an event with Bush. Asked how many were Democrats—this was two months into Bush's tenure, when he was making a big deal of meeting with members of the other party—Fleischer said, "I don't have any breakdown here." (The breakdown was six Republicans, no Democrats.) Last year Fleischer ticked off for the press Bush's legislative priorities. "Where does campaign finance rank in those priorities?" asked one. "I don't do linear rankings," Fleischer replied, as if to suggest that answering the question would require a sophisticated mathematical analysis.

To emphasize his inability to answer these complicated questions, Fleischer occasionally pleads lack of expertise. Last year he touted a drop in oil prices since Bush took office and plugged the president's energy plan. Would the energy plan, which would take effect over the long run, impact short-term prices? "I'm not an economist," he demurred. What does the administration think about an unfavorable court ruling? "I'm not a lawyer." Has Yasir Arafat been elected democratically? "I personally am just not expert enough to be able to answer that question.... That was before I came to this White House."

For any administration, the most damaging information often comes in the form of anonymous quotes from White House staffers. Leaks rarely happen in this administration; but when they do, they are often more damaging for their infrequency. So in order to avoid answering questions arising from such leaks, Fleischer simply denies their veracity. Asked, in the wake of the Venezuelan coup, about a quote in *The New York Times* attributed to a "Defense Department official," Fleischer went on the attack:

> Fleischer: And what's the name of the official?
>
> Q: The official is unnamed. But it is—
>
> Fleischer: Then how do you know he's "top"?
>
> Q: It says, according to *The New York Times*. So is this official mistaken?
>
> Fleischer: You don't know the person's name?
>
> Q: No, I don't know the—
>
> Fleischer: The person obviously doesn't have enough confidence in what he said to say it on the record.... So I think if you can establish the name of this person who now without a name you're calling "top," we can further that. But I think you're—you need to dig into that.

(Fleischer himself, of course, makes a regular practice of speaking to reporters off the record.)

In the even rarer case that an administration official cuts against the party line *on* the record, Fleischer still manages to come up with a set of rules that enables him not to acknowledge it. A few weeks ago a reporter asked him if Bush agreed with Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, who had said he "can't find too many Americans who believe that they are overtaxed." Fleischer enthusiastically replied in the affirmative. The reporter, realizing Fleischer must have misunderstood the quote, helpfully repeated it. "Oh, I'm sorry. I thought your question was—I hadn't heard that Secretary O'Neill said that," Fleischer backtracked, proceeding to declare, "I have a long-standing habit in this briefing room, when a reporter describes to me the statements that are made by government officials, I always like to see those statements myself with my own eyes before I comment." Needless to say, that "long-standing habit" had not prevented Fleischer from commenting when he thought the statement concurred with Bush's own view.

Fleischer likewise reserves the right to close off topics because of timing. This applies first to events that have already taken place. Upon taking office, Fleischer wouldn't comment on allegations (fed by White House leaks) of massive vandalism by departing Clintonites because "the president is looking forward and not backwards." He wouldn't discuss the firing of Army Corps of Engineers head Mike Parker because it was "over and dealt with."

But Fleischer also refuses to address events that have yet to take place. When campaign finance reform moved through the Senate last year, he declined to explain Bush's position: "It's too early, yet, to say." After it passed, and went to the House, Fleischer continued to demur because "[i]t hasn't even made its way through the House yet." After it passed the House, he still wouldn't express a view, because "you just don't know what the Senate is going to do.... There's a lot of talk about will the Senate try to amend it, will they be unsuccessful in amending it? Will the Senate basically take the House bill and put it in a photocopier, and, therefore, send it directly to the president?" Well, a reporter asked, what if they *do* photocopy it? Fleischer retorted—you guessed it—"I don't answer hypotheticals."

The reporter tried, valiantly, to get an answer one more time, with a query that was clear, nonhypothetical, White House-related, and present tense: "Of the two bills that have been passed, is there any reason to veto either one?" Fleischer's answer? "We're going to go around in circles on this." You can't argue with that. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

People and Others

THE ROOF OF the world film market must be in shreds. In the last six months three films have zoomed up through it on their opening weekends: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Spider-Man*. Now, to ravage the roof further, comes the latest *Star Wars* missile, subtitled **Episode II—Attack of the Clones** (20th Century Fox). Where will it all end? (It probably won't.)

Crammed though *Episode II* is with all kinds of combat—interplanetary conflict, shoot-outs with futuristic guns, electric assaults, duels with neon swords—what it produced in me was serenity. Little could make me feel more serene than the thought that an imaginative person is fulfilling his dreams. Can there be a happier person in our time than George Lucas, the originator and chief creator of the now five-part *Star Wars* series? He is the archetypal fantasizing boy made king. Steven Spielberg comes very close, but Spielberg is sometimes assailed by grave themes, and, what's more, he deals fruitfully with them. Lucas is unencumbered by mature thought. No daydreaming kid with a bedroom full of comic books and a cellar full of gadgets ever had such a chance to realize his fantasies.

What is especially singular is that Lucas did it all on his own. The three smasheroo pictures listed above were derived from smasheroo published works: a Rowling novel, a Tolkien novel, and a comic book. Lucas is native to cinematics all the way. Educated in film, geared and lubricated by film, he revels in film. Of all these recent bonanzas, *Star Wars* is the only one with no subservience to a previous incarnation, with no need to transform a previous work into screen material. *Star Wars* was born where it lives. To think of Lucas, unbound by any inherited stricture, dreaming away busily so that he will have sufficient dreams to embody—this is a vision of one sort of paradise.

The *Star Wars* series has reached the point where criticism is irrelevant. The many millions around the world, young and older, frothing for this latest progeny of the Lucas brain are not in the least concerned with critical appraisal. Even the relative few who are not frothing presumably have the same uninterest in criticism, though for different reasons. A good deal of what I have read about *Episode II*—I even omit explanation of the numbering—is not criticism but cultural commentary, exploring what the success of the *Star Wars* series says about us. *The New York Times* ran an op-ed piece called "A Very American Movie." This seemed to me unduly parochial. At least half the revenue from this picture, as with its predecessors, will come from abroad. To talk about the imperialism in these films, the magnifying mirror of the American *geist*, is to forget that these pictures are devoured everywhere. They are not, in this sense, American. They are global.

The same could also be said about those much deplored sex-and-violence American films: they are made here but are gobbled up by the world. Yet there is one huge difference between those action flicks and the *Star Wars* quintet. Lucas's films have no people in them, not even to the token degree of Grade B gun-and-girlie flicks. His characters, as is now his norm, are plastic puppets, even in the confectionary love scenes. Most of their dialogue is so doughy that it could be spooned into comic-strip balloons. Lucas simply has no interest in these people. He puts invisible tags on them, winds them up, and sets them loose. He doesn't care in the least, for instance, that some residents of the same planet speak with British accents and some do not. With a fantasizer's aplomb, he treats the hybrids, the animal-humans that he creates, as "people."

The reason for this disregard is central. Lucas showed in *American Graffiti* (1973) that he had some ability to understand the life around him, but even before that (*THX 1138*) and certainly afterward, he has understood something else. He is more interested in what *he* does when he is figuratively alone than in what the actors do, and he knows that his kind of oneiric privacy is precious to many. Thus, for him and for his audience, the people in his films are incidental, almost intrusive: the real protagonists are the imagined settings and devices. Who would care about what these people would say and do if they were transported to Earth? Lucas keeps them in a dream, a galaxy "far, far away," because where they are is more important than who they are. The gorgeous planets and stellar highways are feasts for children who love wonder and battles and escape from parents—and for those adults who want pseudo-juvenile privacy for a few hours. *Star Wars* is not science worship: it is science-flavored secular sin, all the more welcome because it also purveys bite-size moralism.

Some critic, probably French, will write—possibly already has written—that Lucas is an unrecognized postmodernist. The death of character, an idea much advanced by pomo thinkers, is pretty much achieved here; and the strictures of form are bent. I hope only that this critic will also note that Lucas, for all his devout juvenility, is not without humor: the robot waitresses in a coffee shop who wheel around swiftly on unicycles, the cool bad guy who says, "I'm just a simple man, trying to make his way through the universe."

But Lucas will not fret about anyone's monkish analysis. He is happy, and what is more, he is free. He may be the freest person on Earth.

Once in a while an event comes along that, we can foresee, will be used for a film, even though it probably will not make a good one. In 1965 a twenty-eight-year-old named Daniel Burros, a member of the American Nazi Party and an official of the Ku Klux Klan, was discovered to be a Jew. When the discovery was published, he killed himself. The inevitable result is **The Believer** (Fireworks).

Henry Bean has directed adequately. Ryan Gosling in the leading role (given a different name of course) is entirely credible, which means credibly scary. Gosling plays a New York Jew who does not look Semitic, who is furious in his anti-Semitism and polemically clever about it. This man's physical viciousness toward Jews and his quick polemics in argument are done well enough to be unsettling. But, as in previous films about warped and dangerous people, this screenplay—also by Bean—salivates over the frightening episodes. These are the least enlightening moments in the story. We know how anti-Semites spout. All that could be truly interesting is how this Jew became a Nazi in the first place, and why he was sufficiently harrowed to kill himself when exposed—and these matters are scanted in the screenplay. Perhaps this man thought the easiest way to escape anti-Semitism was to become an anti-

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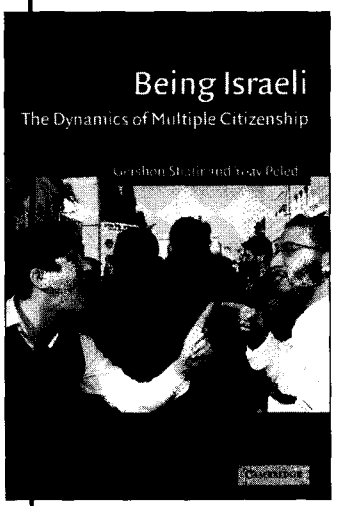

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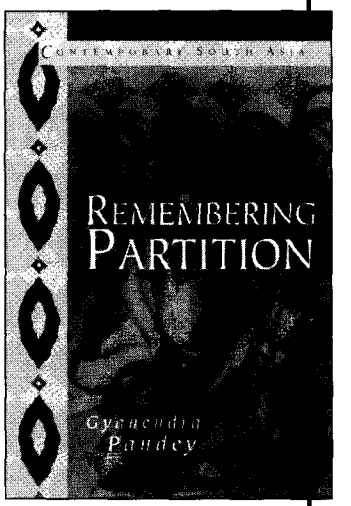

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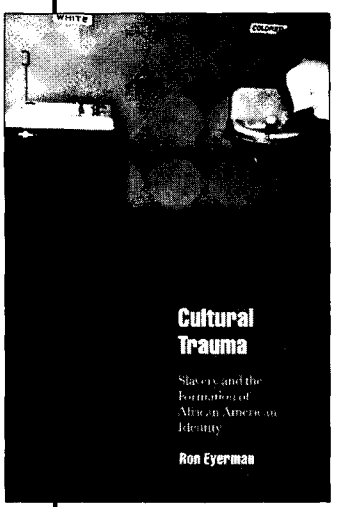

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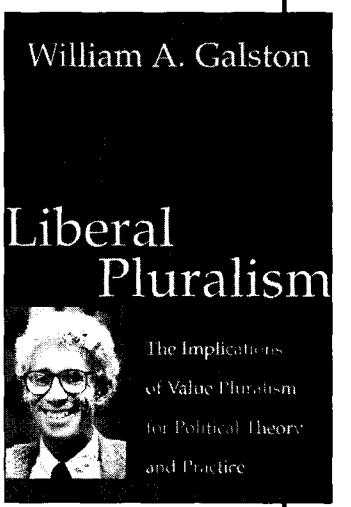

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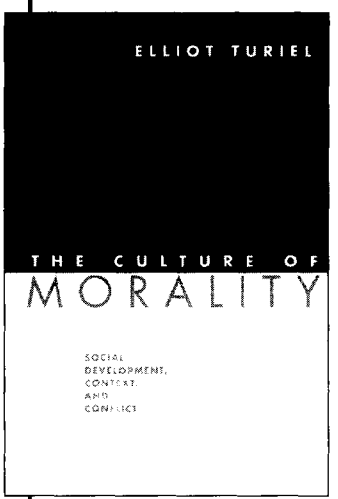

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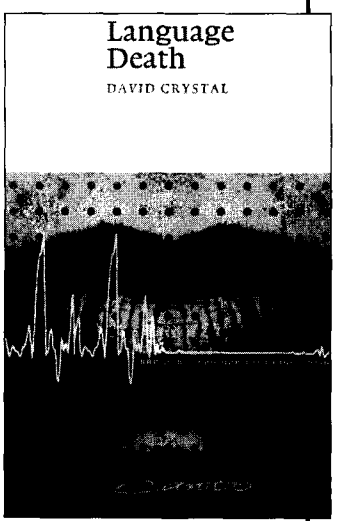

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Semite. Perhaps the hatred he felt against Jew-baiters could best be released by becoming one himself. These matters, or other reasons, are left nebulous. His contrition, brought about by an encounter with a Torah when he and friends desecrate a synagogue, is facile.

This film might have succeeded if Bean had understood that the beginning and the end of the story are really what it is about. The middle, so easily exploitable, is run-of-the-muck-mill. ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

Comedy Is Harder

THERE IS AN old story about a dying vaudevillian whose family is gathered around his bed while the old man wheezes and gasps for his last breath. "Poor Dad, poor Dad, dying is hard," says his son. "Yes," replies the vaudevillian, "dying is hard. Comedy is harder."

Noël Coward's career was dedicated to making comedy look easy, even facile, a kind of dry verbal concoction that coats the tongue like sour candy. **Private Lives**, in its current rehabilitation at the Richard Rodgers Theater, is the most accomplished of these bittersweet confections. It is also Coward's most gossamer play, and the one most likely to evaporate in the process of performance. John Lahr, whose *Coward the Playwright* is the locus classicus of Coward scholarship, quotes another admiring Coward critic prophesying that "within a few years, the student of drama will be sitting in complete bewilderment before the text of *Private Lives* wondering what on earth those fellows in 1930 saw in so flimsy a trifle." And yet here we are, more than seven decades later, in post-September America, being entertained by a comic soufflé with no plot, no characters, no theme, and no apparent purpose other than to consolidate its author's reputation for witty sangfroid.

You can see why the morally earnest, socially conscious, politically engaged radicals of the 1930s found Coward's characters to be the very essence of callous sophistication and heartless aestheticism. There is a typical moment in *Private Lives* when Amanda and Elyot, pursuing a kind of metaphysical chic, discuss the possibility of life after death:

> ELYOT: Don't you believe in—? (*He nods upwards*)
> AMANDA: No, do you?
> ELYOT (*shaking his head*): No. What about—? (*Points downwards*)
> AMANDA: Oh dear no.
> ELYOT: Don't you believe in anything?
> AMANDA: Oh yes, I believe in being kind to everybody, and giving money to old beggar-women, and being as gay as possible.

This is so shallow that it is almost profound. Such passages made Coward an extremely easy mark for impassioned rhetoric about the political purblindness of the upper classes. On the first night of their twin honeymoons, Elyot and Amanda blow off their new spouses with as much indifference to the feelings of others as they show to their own responsibilities. Aside from pitching pennies at the needy and "being kind to everybody," they are endowed with no purpose in life whatsoever. We do not know how they got their money or how they kill their time, except for honeymoons on the beaches of the French Riviera or ski trips down the slopes of St. Moritz while formulating epigrams.

Lahr characterizes this sort of thing as the very embodiment of camp, of life as a game or a charade; but it is actually the flip side of a deep sentimentality. The same Coward who imagined people lounging in silk dressing gowns, or sipping cocktails on the patios of posh beach hotels while chattering about the Duke of Westminster's yacht, was capable of the most saccharine expressions of patriotism. In wartime films such as *In Which We Serve*, he combined swelling Hail Britannia speeches with the most tremulous tributes to the noble qualities of the English lower classes (usually played by John Mills).

Having discharged my own responsibilities to the importance of being earnest, let me now admit that we probably have no choice but to enjoy *Private Lives* on its own terms—as a play that exults in its total lack of a public dimension. Coward's acerbic wit, his submerged sensibility, and his clipped semantics actually had a profound influence on the styles of virtually all the English dramatists who followed him, including Pinter and Osborne, Stoppard and Frayn. He was the one stylist who linked the past and the future of English drama.

Indeed, if one can ignore the really stunning scope of its superficiality, even *Private Lives* takes on a certain historical dimension. It is the culmination of a whole genre of love comedies, beginning with Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, continuing through Congreve's *The Way of the World*, and climaxing with Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In all those plays, the objective of the central characters is to find some way to express their romantic feelings without losing their reputations as wits.

Like Beatrice and Benedict, or Millamant and Mirabel, or Gwendolen Fairfax and Jack Worthing, Amanda and Elyot are so clearly meant for each other that it takes a tremendous amount of authorial ingenuity to keep them apart until the final curtain. Coward's hero and heroine are divorced, but (in a familiar example of the coincidences that drive this play) they meet again on the balconies of adjoining hotel suites where they are honeymooning with the twits they have married. It is evident within minutes that they will abandon their new spouses and renew their old relationship. Coward fills the interstices with re-enactments of the epic battles that separated them in the first place, alternating with a few tender reprises of his cocktail-hour song "Somewhere I'll Find You." ("Change partners and dance" might have been more appropriate theme music.)

Noël Coward wrote this play for himself and Gertrude Lawrence. The current replacements pay homage to their predecessors without the deference of imitation. For Coward's raised eyebrow, Alan Rickman substitutes a deeply curled lip; for Lawrence's slightly dotty insouciance, Lindsay Duncan provides a peaches-and-cream sophistication. These two accomplished English actors were last seen on our stage being equally unfaithful to each other and other lovers in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (also directed by Howard Davies). Since then, they have ripened into a couple with the finesse of experienced dancers in a play that resembles a ballet even more than it does a drama.

Rickman's film roles, which include a variety of cosmopolitan villains, have exposed an edge of menace the comic side of which he hones here. His legato baritone, issuing from interior regions without any apparent sign of articulation by his

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lips, is a splendid instrument for Coward one-liners such as "Certain women should be struck regularly—like a gong" (as well as his response to Amanda's "Whose yacht is that? . . . I wish I were on it"—"I wish you were too").

Duncan brings to the stage some of the wry helpless wisdom that made Madeleine Carroll so appealing in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. It is she who carries the more dangerous stuff of the play—namely its sincerity, an excess of which can be death to this kind of comedy. Emma Fielding and Adam Godley as Sibyl and Victor, the underwritten stick figures of the evening, perform with heroic commitment to the physical and intellectual stiffness of their characters. At one point Amanda says: "Extraordinary how potent cheap music is." The same tribute can be paid to the potency of superficial wit comedies.

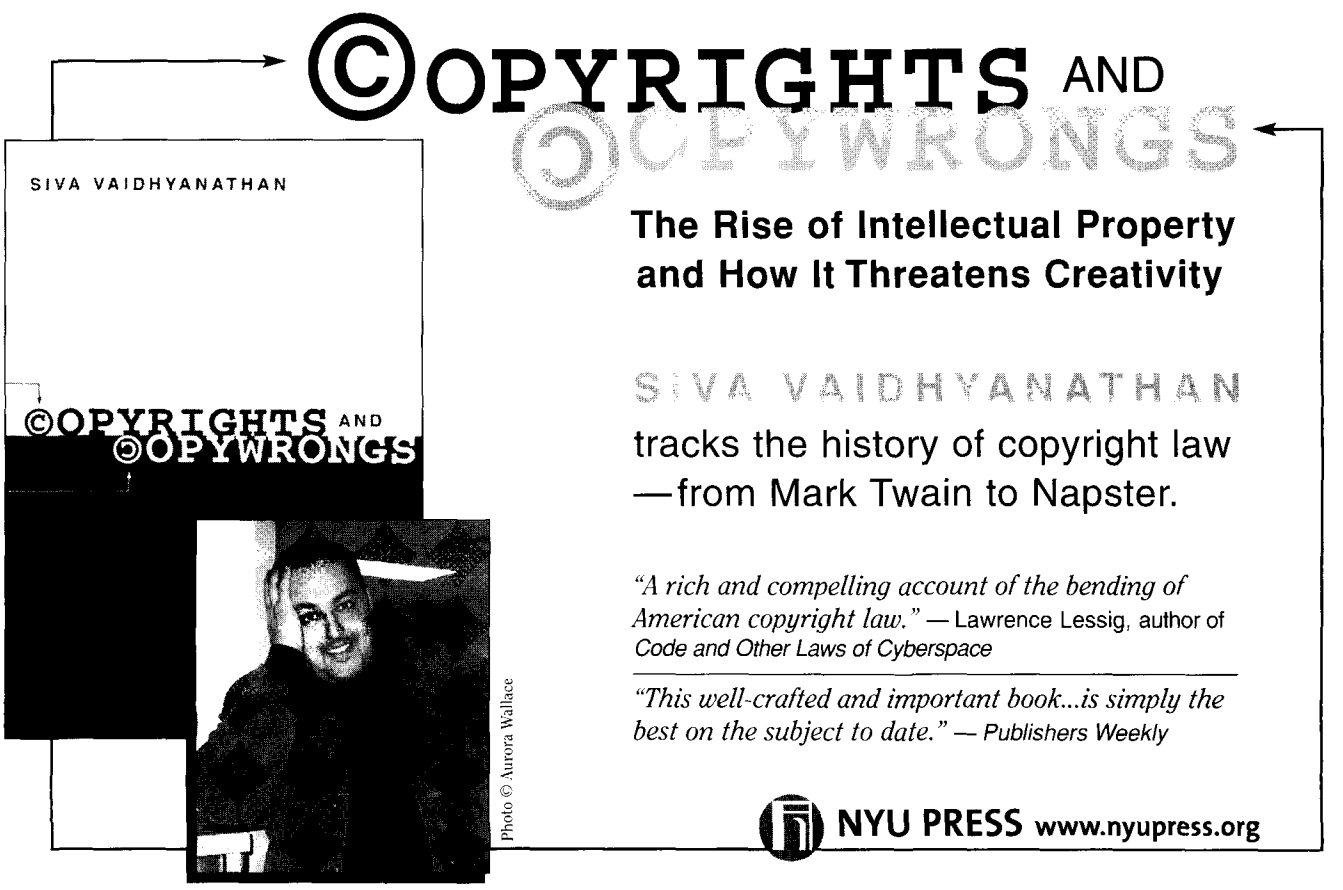
If comedy is hard, farce is even harder, so it is pleasant to report that the Classic Stage Company is doing a lovely job with Steve Martin's adaptation of Carl Sternheim's early twentieth-century work **The Underpants**. This play belongs to a farcical genre that draws explosive consequences out of a single crashingly trivial event, a process suggested by the titles of such plays as Scribe's *A Glass of Water* and Sardou's *A Scrap of Paper*. Another famous example of the genre is Labiche's classic *The Italian Straw Hat*, in which massive social confusion (similar to the mere mention of a "bald soprano" in Ionesco's play) is caused by a horse having eaten a lady's hat.

In Sternheim's comedy, the engine of the plot is that the heroine, Louise Maske, inadvertently spent two seconds in broad daylight with her underpants around her ankles in public view of a lot of people, including "His Royal Highness." (This gaffe is foreshadowed, in Scott Pask's charming Biedermeier set, by an act curtain composed of white, pink, and beige women's lingerie that, to the accompaniment of the overture to *Lohengrin*, drops to the floor at the beginning of the action.) Louise's pompous husband Theo, a remarkably straitlaced bourgeois, is convinced that he will be blamed for the shame that has fallen on his family. Although Louise believes that nobody noticed, the parade of suitors who come to lease the room the couple have up for rent suggests otherwise. ("Never underestimate the power of a glimpse of lingerie," her frantic husband shouts.)

Among these amorous Sternheim swains—most of them re-baptized by the adaptor with whimsical names—are the Byronic poet Versati (elegantly played in the manner of the young Olivier by Christian Camargo); a self-protective Jew (Lee Wilkof) who spells Cohen with a K and "kosher" with a C, while amending his "oys" to "ays"; and an old man named Klinglehoff (William Duell) who tells everyone he suffers from constipation ("but that's my business"). And in the midst of all this farcical derring-do, Louise is experiencing something of a sexual awakening. As played with exquisite China-doll delicacy by Cheryl Lynn Bowers, always looking up at the ceiling with her fingers extended as if to catch some bird on the wing, Louise has the precarious innocence of a Restoration country wife. By the end of the play, it will be surrendered to the king and all the others who are sharing her rented room.

Byron Jennings as Theo Maske, a German burgher whose plastered hair gives him some resemblance to Hitler, finally settles into subtlety after a beginning that is a little too aggressive and loud for the size of the house. That is to say, Jennings finally begins to play the farce rather than simply demonstrate it. (Kristine Nielsen as Louise's upstairs friend sometimes suffers from the same problem before making a nice recovery into reality.) Farce requires an absolute, if exaggerated, commitment to truth, which is why it is such a maddeningly difficult form.

In a production that represents Barry Edelstein's best work thus far as a director, the version of the play by Steve Martin is a classic lesson in adaptation. Like Woody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Allen, Martin likes to drop the names of philosophers and intellectuals (as in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, which featured Pablo Picasso in colloquy with Albert Einstein, later joined by Elvis Presley). Here he makes occasional references to Nietzsche, Wagner, and even Carl Sternheim (returning from one of his plays, a character says, "Very funny; it needs to be adapted"), which lend a piquant concreteness to this classical farce. Add to the mix his generous helpings of hilarious sexual innuendo and you have an evening that works on you like a tonic. In such accomplished hands, only dying seems hard. ■

How to misunderstand everybody in the world.

Civilizational Imprisonments

By AMARTYA SEN

I.

CONFLICT BETWEEN civilizations has been a popular topic for a long time—well before the dreadful events of September 11 ushered in a period of open confrontation and pervasive distrust in the world. Yet these terrible happenings have had the effect of magnifying the ongoing interest in the so-called "clash of civilizations," of which the classic statement can be found in Samuel Huntington's famous and ambitiously impressive book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, which appeared five years before the World Trade Center was targeted. Indeed, many leading commentators have tended to see a firm connection between global conflicts and civilizational confrontations—most notably, between "Western" and "Islamic" civilizations. The intellectual basis of that thesis and related ideas requires a close examination, both for its obvious epistemic interest and—more immediately—for its far-reaching relevance to practical politics in the contemporary world. The need for that critical scrutiny is now greater than it has ever been.

The thesis of a civilizational clash can be ideologically linked with a more general idea that provides the methodological foundation of the "clash thesis." This concerns the program of categorizing people of the world according to some single—and allegedly commanding—system of classification. To see any person wholly, or even primarily, as a member of a so-called civilization (in Huntington's categorization, as a member of "the Western world," "the Islamic world," "the Hindu world," or "the Buddhist world") is already to reduce people into this one dimension. The deficiency of the clash thesis, I would argue, begins well before we get to the point of asking whether the disparate civilizations (among which the population of the world is forcefully partitioned out) must necessarily—or even typically—clash. No matter what answer we give to this question, by even pursuing the question in this restrictive form we implicitly give credibility to the allegedly unique importance of one categorization over all the other ways in which people of the world may be classified.

Opponents of the "clash theory" can actually contribute to its intellectual foundation if they accept the same singular classification of the world population. The same impoverished vision of the world—divided into boxes of civilizations—is shared by those who preach amity among discrete and disjunctive civilizations and those who see them as clashing. In disputing the obtuse and gross generalization that members of the Islamic civilization have an essentially belligerent culture, for example, it is common enough to argue that they actually share a culture of peace. But this simply replaces one stereotype with another; and it involves accepting an implicit presumption that people who happen to be Muslim by religion would be much the same in other ways as well.

Aside from all the difficulties in defining civilizational categories as disparate units (on which more presently), the arguments on both sides suffer from a shared faith in the presumption that seeing people exclusively, or primarily, in terms of religion-based civilizations to which they are assumed to belong is a good way of understanding human beings. Civilizational partitioning is a pervasively intrusive phenomenon in social analysis (stifling other ways of seeing people) even without its being supplemented by the incendiary belief in the particular thesis of a civilizational clash.

If "the clash of civilizations" is the grand thesis about the divisions of the contemporary world, there are lesser but still influential claims that relate contrasts of cultures and identities to the conflicts—and the profusion of atrocities—that we see in different parts of the world today. Instead of one majestically momentous partition, as in Huntington's world, that splits the world's population into contending civilizations, the lesser variants of the approach view local populations as being respectively split into clashing groups, with divergent cultures and disparate histories that tend, in an almost "natural" way, to breed enmity toward each other. Conflicts involving Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, and Serbs and Albanians in the former Yugoslavia, and Hindus and Muslims in the subcontinent, and so on, are then re-interpreted in lofty historical terms, reading into them much more than contemporary politics. Modern conflicts that call for analysis in terms of contemporary events and machinations are then interpreted as ancient feuds—real or imagined—that place today's players in pre-ordained roles in an allegedly ancestral play. The "civilizational" approach to contemporary conflicts (in grander or lesser versions) serves as a major obstacle to focusing more fully on the actual prevailing politics and the dynamics of contemporary events.

It is not hard to understand why the civilizational approach is so appealing to so many people. It invokes the richness of history, and it seems to call upon the depth and the gravity of cultural analysis, seeking profundity of understanding in a way that an immediate political analysis of the "here and now" would seem to lack. If I am disputing the civilizational approach, it is not because I do not see its attractions and intellectual temptations. Indeed, I am reminded of an event nearly fifty years ago, shortly after I first arrived in England from India as a student at Cambridge. A kindly fellow student took me to see the recently released film *Rear Window*, in which I encountered James Stewart looking at some very suspicious events in the house opposite his own. Like the James Stewart character, I too, in my naïve way, became convinced that a gruesome murder had been committed in the apartment across the courtyard; but my intellectual friend

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went on explaining to me (amid whispered requests from neighbors urging him to shut up) that he was quite certain that there was no murder at all, no basis in reality for James Stewart's (and my own) suspicion, and that the whole film was really an indictment of McCarthyism in America, which encouraged everyone to watch the activities of other people with great suspicion. "This film is a critique," my friend informed the novice from the Third World, "of the growing Western culture of snooping." Such a film, I had to agree, would have been in many ways a much more penetrating and solemn work, but I kept wondering whether it was, in fact, the film that we were watching. What must be similarly asked is whether what we are watching in the world in which we live is actually a clash of civilizations, or something much more mundane that merely looks like a civilizational clash to determined seekers of profundity.

The depth that civilizational analysis seeks is not exclusive, though, to the high road of intellectual analysis. In some ways, civilizational analysis mirrors and magnifies common beliefs that flourish in not particularly intellectual circles. The invoking of, say, "Western" values against "non-Western" values is rather commonplace in public discussions, and it makes regular headlines in tabloids as well as figuring in political rhetoric and anti-immigrant oratory (from the United States and Canada to Germany, France, and the Netherlands). In the aftermath of September 11, the stereotyping of Muslims came often enough from people who are no great specialists in civilizational categories (to say the least). But theories of civilizational clash have often provided allegedly dispassionate and sophisticated foundations for coarse popular beliefs. Complicated theory can sometimes bolster uncomplicated bigotry and can make the world a much more flammable place than it needs to be.

II.

WHAT, THEN, ARE the difficulties of civilizational analysis? I shall begin by discussing a little more the problem that I claimed was its most basic weakness: the presumption that a person can be regarded preeminently not as an individual with many affiliations, nor as a member of many different groups, but as a member merely of one particular group, which gives her a uniquely important identity. The implicit belief in the over-arching power of a singular classification is not only gross, it is also grossly confrontational in form and in implication. Such a divisive view goes not only against the old-fashioned belief (which tends to be ridiculed these days as much too soft-headed) that "we are all basically just human beings," but also against the important understanding that we are *diversely* different. Indeed, I would argue that the main hope of harmony in the contemporary world lies in the plurality of our identities, which cut across each other and work against sharp divisions around one single hardened line of impenetrable identity. Our shared humanity gets savagely challenged when the confrontation is unified into a solitary—and allegedly dominant—system of classification; this is much more divisive than the universe of plural and diverse categorizations that shape the world in which we actually live.

The realization that we each have multiple identities may sound like a much grander idea than it is. Indeed, it is a very elementary recognition. In our normal lives, we see ourselves as members of a variety of groups: we belong to all of them. The same person can be an American citizen of Malaysian origin with Chinese racial characteristics, a Christian, a libertarian, a political activist, a woman, a poet, a vegetarian, an asthmatic, a historian, a schoolteacher, a bird-watcher, a baseball fan, a lover of jazz, a heterosexual, a supporter of gay and lesbian rights, and a person deeply committed to the view that creatures from outer space regularly visit Earth in colorful vehicles and sing tantalizing songs. Each of these collectivities, to all of which this individual belongs, gives her a particular identity, which—depending on the context—can be quite important; but none of them has a unique and pre-ordained role in defining this person.

The relative importance of the different groups to which any person belongs can vary, depending on the context and the person's priorities. Being a teetotaler, for example, can be a more important identity when one is invited to a wine-tasting party than the same person's identity as, say, a poet or an American or a Protestant. It need not cause any problem for action choice, either, especially when the demands associated with different identities do not, in fact, conflict. In many contexts, however, the different components of one's identity may well compete in one's decision regarding what to do. One may have to choose the relative importance to attach to one's activism as a citizen over one's love of baseball if a citizens' meeting clashes with a promising game. One has to decide how to deal with alternative claims on one's attention and loyalties that compete with one another.

Identity, then, cannot be only a matter of "discovery" (as communitarian philosophers often claim); it is a matter of choice as well. It is possible that the often-repeated belief that identity is a matter of "discovery" is encouraged by the fact that the choices we can make are constrained by feasibility, and sometimes the constraints are very exacting. The feasibilities will certainly depend on particular circumstances. The constraints may be especially strict in defining the extent to which we can persuade others to take us to be different from what they take us to be. A Jewish person in Nazi Germany could not easily choose a different identity from the one with which others marked him or her. The freedom in choosing the importance to attach to our different identities is always constrained, and in some cases very sharply so.

This point is not in dispute. The fact that we always choose within particular constraints is a standard feature of every choice. As any theorist of choice knows, choices of all kinds are always made within particular feasibility restrictions. As students of elementary economics all have to learn, the theory of consumer choice does not deny the existence of a budget that restrains the consumer's purchasing ability. The presence of the budget constraint does not imply that there is no choice to be made, but only that the choice has to be made within that constraint.

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What is true in elementary economics is also true in complex political and social decisions. While the Jewish person in Nazi Germany may have had difficulty in paying attention to her other identities, there are many other contexts that give more room for effective choice, in which the competing claims of other affiliations (varying from nationality, language, and literature to profession and political belief) will demand serious attention and require a reflective resolution.

There is also the ethical issue regarding the status of identity-based claims of any kind vis-à-vis arguments that do not turn on any identity whatsoever. Our duty to other human beings may not necessarily be linked only to the fact that we share a common human identity, but rather to our sense of concern for them irrespective of any sharing of identity. Moreover, the reach of our concern may apply to other species as well, despite the lack of a shared human identity and the non-invoking of any other identity that would try to translate a general ethical argument into a specialized identity-centered morality. (I have discussed these distinctions in these pages in "Other People," December 18, 2000.)

WHILE RELIGIOUS CATEGORIES have received much airing in recent years, they cannot be presumed to obliterate other distinctions and other concerns, and even less be taken to be the only relevant system of classifying people across the globe. It is the plurality of our identities, and our right to choose how we see ourselves (with what emphases and what priorities), that the civilizational classifications tend to overlook, in a largely implicit—rather than transparent—way.

The civilizational classifications have often closely followed religious divisions. Huntington contrasts "Western civilization" with "Islamic civilization," "Hindu civilization," "Buddhist civilization," and so on; and while hybrid categories are accommodated (such as "Sinic civilization" or "Japanese civilization"), the alleged battlefronts of religious differences are incorporated into a carpentered vision of one dominant and hardened divisiveness. By categorizing all people into those belonging to "the Islamic world," "the Christian world," "the Hindu world," "the Buddhist world," and so on, the divisive power of classificatory priority is implicitly used to place people firmly inside a unique set of rigid boxes. Other divisions (say, between the rich and the poor, between members of different classes and occupations, between people of different politics, between distinct nationalities and residential locations, between language groups, and so on) are all submerged by this allegedly preeminent way of seeing the differences between people.

The belief in a unique categorization is both a serious descriptive mistake and an ethical and political hazard. People do see themselves in very many different ways. A Bangladeshi Muslim is not only a Muslim but also a Bengali and a Bangladeshi, possibly quite proud of Bengali literature. The separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan was driven not by religion, but by language, literature, and politics. A Nepalese Hindu is not only a Hindu, but also has political and ethnic characteristics that have their own relevance, and that allow Nepal to be, unlike India, an officially Hindu state (indeed, the only one in the world). Poverty, too, can be a great source of solidarity across other boundaries. The kind of division highlighted by the so-called "anti-globalization" protesters (one of the most globalized movements in the world) tries to unite the underdogs of the world economy, cutting across religious or national or civilizational lines of division. The multiplicity of categories works against rigid separation and its ignitable implications.

III.

ASIDE FROM BEING morally and politically destructive, the epistemic content of the classification according to so-called civilizations is highly dubious. It could not but be so, since in focusing on one exclusive way of dividing the people of the world, the approach has to cut many corners. In describing India as a "Hindu civilization," for example, Huntington's exposition of the alleged "clash of civilizations" has to downplay the fact that India has more Muslims than any other country in the world, with the exception of Indonesia and marginally Pakistan. India may or may not be placed within the arbitrary definition of "the Muslim world," but it is still the case that India (with its 125 million Muslims—more than the entire populations of Britain and France put together) has a great many more Muslims than nearly every country in the so-called "Muslim world."

It is impossible to think of "Indian civilization" without taking note of the major role of Muslims in the history of India. Indeed, it is futile to try to have an understanding of the nature and the range of Indian art, literature, music, or food without seeing the extensive interactions that were not deterred by barriers of religious communities. And Muslims are not, of course, the only non-Hindu group that helps to constitute India. The Sikhs are a major presence, as are the Jains. Not only is India the country of origin of Buddhism, but Buddhism was the dominant religion of India for more than a millennium. Atheistic schools of thought—the Charvaka and the Lokayata—have also flourished in the country from at least the sixth century B.C.E. to the present day. There have been Christian communities in India from the fourth century C.E.—two hundred years before there were Christian communities in Britain. Jews came to India shortly after the fall of Jerusalem; Parsees started coming in the eighth century.

Given all this, Huntington's description of India as a "Hindu civilization" is an epistemic and historical absurdity. It is also politically combustible. It tends to add a superficial and highly deceptive credibility to the extraordinary neglect of history—and of present realities—that some Hindu fundamentalists have tried to champion, most recently in an exceptionally barbaric way in Gujarat. Even though these political groups seem to be trying their best to overturn Indian secularism, the secular constitution of India as well as the large majority of Indians who are committed to secularism would make it hard to achieve this. The fact that the poison of sectarian violence so far has not spread beyond the limits of one state—Gujarat, with a ruling government that is at best grossly incompetent but most likely a great deal worse—is perhaps ground for some cautious optimism about the future of India. But the human costs of violent extremism have been truly monumental.

THE PORTRAYAL OF India as a Hindu civilization may be a simple-minded mistake, but crudity of one kind or another is present in the characterizations of other civilizations as well. Consider what is called "Western civilization." Indeed, the champions of "the clash of civilizations," in line with their belief in the profundity of this singular line of division, tend to see tolerance as a special and perennial feature of Western civilization, extending way back into history. Huntington insists that the "West was West long before it was modern," and cites (among other allegedly special features such as "social pluralism") "a sense of individualism and a tradition of individual rights and liberties unique among civilized societies." This, too, is at best a gross oversimplification.

Tolerance and liberty are certainly among the important achievements of modern Europe (leaving out aberrations such as Nazi Germany or the intolerant governance of British or French or Portuguese empires in Asia and Africa). But to see a unique line of historical division there—going back over the millennia—is quite fanciful. The championing of political liberty and religious tolerance, in its

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full contemporary form, is not an old historical feature in any country or any civilization in the world. Plato and Aquinas were not less authoritarian in their thinking than was Confucius. This is not to deny that there were champions of tolerance in classical European thought, but if this is taken to give credit to the whole Western world (from the ancient Greeks to the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths), there are similar examples in other cultures.

The Indian emperor Ashoka's dedicated championing of religious and other kinds of tolerance in the third century B.C.E. (arguing that "the sects of other people all deserve reverence for one reason or another") is certainly among the earliest political defenses of tolerance anywhere. The recent Bollywood movie *Ashoka* (made, as it happens, by a Muslim director) may or may not be accurate in all its details, but it rightly emphasizes the importance of secularism in Ashoka's thinking two and a half millennia ago and indicates its continuing relevance in contemporary India. While a later Indian emperor, Akbar, the Great Mughal, was making similar pronouncements on religious tolerance in Agra at the end of the sixteenth century ("No one should be interfered with on account of religion, and anyone is to be allowed to go over to a religion that pleases him"), the Inquisitions were active in Europe and Giordano Bruno was being burned in the Campo dei Fiori in Rome.

SIMILARLY, WHAT IS often called "Western science" draws on a world heritage. There is a chain of intellectual relations that links Western mathematics and science to a collection of distinctly non-Western practitioners. Even today, when a modern mathematician at, say, Princeton invokes an "algorithm" to solve a difficult computational problem, she helps to commemorate the contributions of the ninth-century Arab mathematician Al-Khwarizmi, from whose name the term "algorithm" is derived. (The term "algebra" comes from his book *Al-Jabr wa-al-Muqabilah*.) The decimal system, which evolved in India in the early centuries of the first millennium, arrived in Europe at the end of that millennium, transmitted by the Arabs. A large group of contributors from different non-Western societies—Chinese, Arab, Iranian, Indian, and others—influenced the science, the mathematics, and the philosophy that played a major part in the European Renaissance and, later, in the European Enlightenment.

In his *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, Thomas Carlyle claimed that "the three great elements of modern civilization" are "Gunpowder, Printing, and the Protestant Religion." While the Chinese cannot be held responsible for Protestantism, their contribution to Carlyle's list of civilizational ingredients is not insignificant, though it is less total than it is in the case of Francis Bacon's earlier list, in *Novum Organum*, of "printing, gunpowder, and the magnet." The West must get full credit for the remarkable achievements that occurred in Europe during the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, but the idea of an immaculate Western conception would require a genuinely miraculous devotion to parochialism.

Not only is the flowering of global science and technology not an exclusively West-led phenomenon, there were major global advances in the world that took the form of international encounters far away from Europe. Consider printing, which features in Carlyle's list, and which Bacon put among the developments that "have changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world." The technology of printing was a great Chinese achievement, but the use to which the Chinese put this new method was not confined merely to local or parochial pursuits. Indeed, the first printed book was a Sanskrit treatise in Buddhist philosophy, *Vajracchedika-prajnaparamita Sutra* (sometimes referred to as the "Diamond Sutra"), translated into Chinese from Sanskrit in the early fifth century and printed four centuries later in 868 C.E. The translator of the Diamond Sutra, Kumarajiva, was half Indian and half Turkish. He lived in a part of eastern Turkistan called Kucha, traveled extensively in India, and later moved to China, where he headed the newly established institute of foreign languages in Xi'an in the early fifth century. The West figured not at all in the first stirring of what came to be a mainstay of Western civilization.

IV.

THE NARROWNESS OF the civilizational mode of thinking has many far-reaching effects. It fuels alienation among people from different parts of the world, and it encourages a distanced and possibly confrontational view of others. Even the resistance to so-called "Westernization" by non-Western activists frequently takes the form of shunning "Western" (or what some Western spokesmen have claimed to be exclusively "Western") objects, even though they are among the historical products of diverse global interactions.

Indeed, in a West-dominated world, many non-Western people tend to think of themselves quintessentially as "the other," in contra-distinction to the West. (This phenomenon has been beautifully

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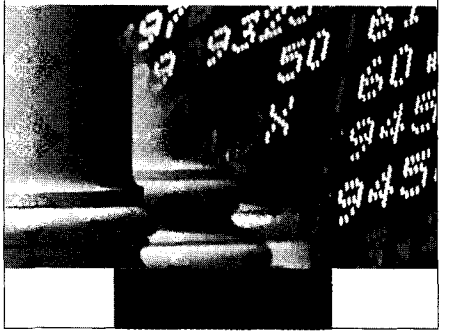

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analyzed by Akeel Bilgrami in an essay called "What Is a Muslim?" in *Identities*, edited by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates Jr.) The political force of this phenomenon makes the effects of Western expropriation of a global heritage even more disastrous. It plays a regressive role in the self-identification of the colonial and postcolonial world, and in parts of the "anti-globalization" movement. It takes a heavy toll by inciting parochial tendencies and needless confrontations; it tends to undermine the possibility of objectivity in science and knowledge; and it deflects attention from the real issues to be faced in contemporary globalization (including the ways and means of reducing massive inequality of opportunities without losing the technological and economic rewards of global interaction).

TO FOCUS JUST on the grand religious classification, in its civilizational garb, is not only to miss many significant concerns and ideas that can move people. Such a focus also has the effect of lessening the importance of other priorities by artificially magnifying the voice of religious authority. The clerics are then treated as the *ex officio* spokesmen for the so-called "Islamic world," even though a great many Muslims have profound differences with what is proposed by one mullah or another. The same would apply to other religious leaders' being seen as the spokespeople for their "flocks." The singular classification not only makes one distinction among many into a uniquely inflexible barrier, it also gives a commanding voice to the "establishment" figures in the respective religious and sectarian hierarchy, while other voices are muffled.

A person's religious or civilizational identity may well be very important for her, but it is one membership among many. The question we have to ask is not, say, whether Islam (or Hinduism or Christianity) is a peace-loving religion or a combative one, but how a religious Muslim (or Hindu or Christian) may combine his or her religious beliefs or practices with other commitments and values, with other features of personal identity. To see one's religious—or civilizational—affiliation as an all-engulfing identity would be a deeply problematic diagnosis. There have been fierce warriors as well as great champions of peace among devoted members of each religion; and rather than asking which one is the "true believer" and which one a "mere imposter," we should accept that our religious faith does not in itself resolve all the decisions that we must make in our lives, including those concerning our political and social priorities and the corresponding issues of conduct and action. Both the proponents of peace and tolerance and the patrons of war and intolerance can belong to the same religion (and may be, in their own ways, true believers) without this being seen as a contradiction. The domain of one's religious identity does not vanquish all other aspects of one's understanding and affiliation.

The increasing use of a religion-based singular civilizational classification also makes the Western response to global terrorism and conflict oddly counterproductive. Respect for other civilizations is shown by praising the religious books of "other people," rather than by taking note of the many-sided involvements and achievements of different peoples in a globally interactive world. As Britain goes down the slippery slope of intensifying faith-based schools (Islamic and Sikh schools are already established, and Hindu ones may come soon), the focus is on what divides people rather than what unites them. The cultivation of analytical and critical reasoning, which Western chauvinists usurp as being quintessentially Western, has to take a back seat to religious education, in which the children of new immigrants are expected to find their "own culture." The sad effect of narrowing the intellectual horizon of young children is further compounded by the gross confusion of civilization with religion.

There is no historical reason, for example, why the championing of the Arab or Muslim heritage has to concentrate only on religion and not also on science and mathematics, to which Arab and Muslim scholars have contributed so much in the past. But crude civilizational classifications have tended to put the latter in the basket of "Western science," leaving other civilizations to mine their pride only in religious depths. The non-Western activists, then, focus on those issues that divide them from the West (religious beliefs, local customs, and cultural specificities) rather than on those things that reflect global interactions (science, mathematics, literature, and so on). The dialectics of the "negation of negation" then extracts a heavy price in fomenting more confrontations in the world.

Moreover, the chosen method of giving each "community" its "own culture" makes the respective religious and theological authorities much more powerful in the schooling of immigrants to Britain, when they are sent to the "faith-based" schools. Religion-based divisions are intensified not only by the efforts of anti-Western religious fundamentalists, but also by the West's own arrangements related to seeing "other people" simply in terms of religion, ignoring the many-sided civilizations from which the immigrants come.

V.

THE RELIANCE ON civilizational partitioning fails badly, then, for a number of distinct reasons. First, the classifications are often based on an extraordinary epistemic crudeness and an extreme historical innocence. The diversity of traditions *within* distinct civilizations is effectively ignored, and major global interactions in science, technology, mathematics, and literature over millennia are made to disappear so as to construct a parochial view of the uniqueness of Western civilization.

Second, there is a basic methodological problem involved in the implicit presumption that a civilizational partitioning is the uniquely relevant distinction, and must swamp other ways of identifying people. It is bad enough that those who foment global confrontations or local sectarian violence try to impose a pre-chosen unitary and divisive identity on people who are to be recruited as the "foot soldiers" of political brutality, but that task gets indirectly yet significantly aided by the implicit support that the warriors get from theories of singular categorization of the people of the world.

from The Cedar of Lebanon

We rowed all night in the river of God
singing *kyrie, kyrie.*

Mercy.

That is the part I never understand.
The garden wall sooty and short.
Snapdragons queer and abundant,

then the dry land rivering up
for all the world like the Venice canals:

dark and holy. And only us watching.
Watching, there in the yard,

the soul of the earth become the soul
of the water, moving.

The two of us singing *kyrie,*
and afterwards parting it as we passed

from knowing into unknowing and back.

Geri Doran

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Third, there is a remarkable neglect of the role of choice and reasoning in decisions regarding what importance to attach to the membership of any particular group, or to any particular identity (among many others). By adopting a unique and allegedly predominant way of categorizing people, civilizational partitioning can materially contribute to the conflicts in the world. To deny choice when it does exist is not only an epistemic failure (a misunderstanding of what the world is like); it is also an ethical delinquency and a political dereliction of responsibility. There is a critical need to recognize the plurality of our identities, and also to acknowledge the fact that, as responsible human beings, we have to choose (rather than inertly "discover") what priorities to give to our diverse associations and affiliations. In contrast, the theorists of inescapable "clashes" try to deny strenuously—or to ignore implicitly—the multiplicity of classifications that compete with each other, and the related need for us all to take decisional responsibilities about our priorities. People are seen as belonging to rigid prisons of allegedly decisive identities.

In a well-known interview, Peter Sellers once remarked: "There used to be a 'me,' but I had it surgically removed." In their respective attempts to impose a single and unique identity on us, the surgical removal of the actual "me" is done by others—the religious fundamentalist, the nationalist extremist, the Western chauvinist, the sectarian provocateur. We have to resist such an imprisonment. We must insist upon the liberty to see ourselves as we would choose to see ourselves, deciding on the relative importance that we would like to attach to our membership in the different groups to which we belong. The central issue, in sum, is freedom. To make our identity into a prison is not social wisdom. It is intellectual surrender. ■

Piteously Love Closed

By HELEN VENDLER

Painted Shadow
by Carole Seymour-Jones

(Doubleday, 698 pp., $35)

THE WILLFULLY TABLOIDAL subtitle of this seven-hundred-page biography of a person relatively insignificant in the annals of literary history is "The life of Vivienne Eliot, first wife of T. S. Eliot, and the long-suppressed truth about her influence on his genius." This subtitle implies that a cabal (of unnamed people) has for a "long" time been "suppressing" an important "truth": the (presumably considerable) "influence" of Eliot's wife Vivien (or Vivienne—she spelled her name both ways) on his "genius." This "influence" was exerted, it is said, by means of her intelligence, her work with him on his journal *The Criterion*, her reading of his poems, and her contribution as a wife and a fellow writer. This is a big claim, and an empty one.

It has long been known that Vivien Eliot wrote (under various pseudonyms) some fifteen lightweight social sketches and reviews for *The Criterion*. She was never published elsewhere; her husband, by paying her, gave her the pitiful illusion that she had a profession. In Vivien's papers in the Bodleian Library, there exist a few additional drafts for unpublished sketches and poems. By 1915, when the twenty-seven-year-old Eliot met Vivien, he was already an accomplished poet. When she later began to compose poems, they echoed those of her husband. One of her poems, originally titled "Ennui," and published by Eliot in *The Criterion* in 1925 under the fancier title "Necessare est Perstare," reads Prufrockishly (but unrhythmically) as follows:

I looked at you and you had stretched
Your arms up above your head
With such an air of weariness,
Like some very old monkey.
I looked at you and you looked at me.
I longed to speak to you,
But I didn't. I longed
To come and stand beside you at the window and
Look out at the fleering
Cold English sunshine and say,
Is it necessary—
Is this necessary—
Tell me, is it necessary that we go through this?

Another poem, unpublished, reads like a leaden imitation of the insistent repetitiveness of "The Hollow Men" ("Eyes I dare not meet in dreams"):

It was after the acrobats
And I left my box
And ran along the corridor
Fast
Because I wanted to get into the air
And in the suffused light of the empty corridor
In the stale air and soft suffused light of the corridor. . .
In the stifling scent of death and suffocation of the corridor
I met my own eyes
In another face.

It is not to be believed that the author of such lines could have had any influence on Eliot's "genius." If, by passing on to her husband some remarks uttered by her maid, and by contributing a line or two of her own ("What you get married for if you don't want children?"), Vivien influenced the colloquial turn of "The Waste Land," it was nonetheless Eliot who decided which lines to write, and it was Pound who decided which lines to cut. Eliot's own ear for demotic conversation was already well developed before he met Vivien, as we can see from the music-hall language of the early poems that have been edited by Christopher Ricks.

THE SENSATIONAL CLAIMS for Vivien's "influence," then, are merely a peg on which Carole Seymour-Jones hangs her account of Vivien's disturbing and tragic life. Like other recent life-histories of the wives or partners of writers and artists (Joyce's Nora, Yeats's "George," Lawrence's Frieda, Pound's Olga, Pollock's Lee), this one aims to bring into the light an overshadowed companion of a gifted man. But this biography is more tendentious than it should be. Seymour-Jones blames Eliot far more than Vivien for the wretched morass that the Eliot marriage became. That neither spouse might be at fault, that a marital mismatch can wreck both partners simply by the psychological havoc that it evokes and imposes, is not a theory considered by Vivien's biographer. The total unfitness of T. S. Eliot for marriage was matched only by the equal unfitness of Vivien Haigh-Wood.

The tale of the Eliots, in Seymour-Jones's version, runs as follows (I will reserve comment for the moment). Tom Eliot, a homosexual who in Paris had fallen in love with Jean Verdenal (a

HELEN VENDLER's new book, *Coming of Age as a Poet: Milton, Keats, Eliot, Plath*, will be published next year by Harvard University Press.

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medical student killed in World War I), later married Vivien Haigh-Wood, after an acquaintance of only three months, for several reasons: to comply with bourgeois expectations; to be "stimulated," as Vivien hoped; and to gain social cover for his true sexual inclinations. This deceit was bound to ruin the marriage, and Tom's incapacity for heterosexual relations created in Vivien a devastating loss of self-esteem. Vivien's irregular and copious menstruations—irremediable in those days—are said to have disgusted Tom, and to have led to further physical estrangement. Recognizing the disastrous mistake that he had made in marrying Vivien, Tom silently acquiesced in her becoming Bertrand Russell's mistress, because Russell provided economic support to the Eliot ménage. ("Opportunistically, while he needed Russell's support, Tom had offered Vivien as bait ... there was an element of homosexuality by proxy in the way in which Eliot offered Vivien to Russell.... There had been a hint of blackmail in Tom's earlier demand that Bertie 'fix' some lecturing work for him.")

Angry nonetheless at Vivien's adultery, Tom became more and more coldly distant, causing her such emotional distress that she fell into more and more illnesses, real even if psychosomatic, and this led to a regime of prescribed drugs that rendered her a lifelong addict. In 1923, Vivien endured "a severe mental and physical breakdown ... as she was finally forced to acknowledge Tom's sexual preferences." Tom's refined cruelty issued from a degree of violence that amounted to wishing Vivien dead; it culminated in 1933 (six years after his conversion to Christianity) when he took separate lodgings at a concealed address, and informed Vivien, at a meeting with her at his solicitors' office, that he was separating from her. In 1938, Eliot and Vivien's brother Maurice conspired to commit the increasingly distraught Vivien to a sanatorium, where she died in 1947, at the age of fifty-eight.

Although the cause of Vivien's death was given on the death certificate as a heart attack, Seymour-Jones falls into one of her frequent suppositions: "Medical negligence may have caused Vivienne's death, but it is more probable that Vivienne saved up her drugs, as Maurice said was her habit, and overdosed." This last lurid invention is borne out by the sort of "evidence" to which Seymour-Jones seems inclined: "Suicide may have seemed her only option. Like Dora Carrington, who found life without Lytton Strachey intolerable, Vivienne saw no meaning in a life without Tom." If Dora Carrington committed suicide, who is to say (according to Seymour-Jones) that Vivien Eliot did not? But why should it have taken Vivien nine years in the sanatorium to conclude that life without Tom required suicide?

The same sort of "logic" supports the baseless presumption of medical error in Vivien's death. Since the death of Ottoline Morrell (the hostess of Garsington) was perhaps caused by malpractice—so Seymour-Jones speculates on no hard evidence—why not the death of Vivien Eliot?

> There is no reason to suppose that [the diagnosis of death by heart attack in Vivien's case] was any more accurate than it had been in the case of Ottoline, who had died in April 1938 after being given a dose of a powerful antibiotic called Prontosil. The cause of her death was also given as heart failure. The doctor who prescribed the drug was threatened with medical investigation following the deaths of other patients, and committed suicide.

T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Vivien Eliot in 1932

COURTESY DOUBLEDAY

But anecdotes about Ottoline's doctor's treatment of other patients have absolutely no probative force about the death of either Ottoline or, heaven knows, of Vivien, who was attended by other doctors altogether. Nor does the fact that Vivien may have "saved up" her doses when she was living independently prove that she could do so, or that she did do so, when she was under the supervision of hospital staff in her last years.

It is maddening to read seven hundred pages of such suppositional "biography." Throughout this book, the ground of fact becomes obscured entirely by a deep layer of speculative quicksand. There is no reason not to have the story of a marriage told from a wife's point of view as well as from a husband's; but there is nothing convincing in the substitution of irresponsible imaginings for truth. Here, for instance, is a sample passage from the biography, about the Russell affair. Eliot (Seymour-Jones reports ungrammatically), in one version of the poem "Ode," "alludes to the 'sullen succuba suspired,' suggesting Vivien sighing gloomily after the departed Russell." In one of her innumerable paragraphs of ungainly potted literary information, Seymour-Jones pursues the matter:

> In seventeenth-century England the word "succuba" also meant "strumpet" or "whore," a fact which would have been known to Eliot, whose knowledge of Jacobean drama was extensive. If Vivien existed in a hidden corner of Tom's imagination as a succuba, a female witch who threatened his potency, might he not also have believed that her diabolical compact was with Russell, who described himself as Satan in his own short story?

No, he might not have so believed. The short story by Russell, "Satan in the Suburbs," was written in 1953, years after Vivien's death in 1947; and there is no evidence that Eliot ever read it, or that he thought of his wife as having made "a diabolical compact" as a succuba with Russell.

The most important supposition among the hundreds of suppositions here is that Eliot was homosexual, knew it, married his wife nonetheless, and subsequently led a life that included furtive homosexual encounters. There is no solid evidence for these conjectures. No male lover ever testified to having had sexual relations with Eliot. When, in 1952, a critic suggested in print that Eliot was homosexual, Eliot's threat of a libel action caused all remaining copies of the journal in which the piece had appeared to be pulped. Eliot was presumably certain that there was no evidence that could be presented in court of his having had homosexual relations. (He dropped his threat to sue after the author unwillingly apologized through his solicitors.)

The fervent letters sent to Eliot by Jean Verdenal in no way suggest a sexual relation, though they testify to a deep affection such as two intense young men might share. (None of Eliot's letters to Verdenal survive.) Such a friendship would not incline a prudish and virginal intellectual such as Eliot to suppose himself intractably homosexual. The fact that Eliot, in 1923, took rooms by himself (supposedly as an office for work on *The Criterion*) where he could escape from Vivien proves nothing. That guests coming to these

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rooms were told to ask for "The Captain" does not imply that sexual activities took place there. Seymour-Jones adduces as evidence Eliot's obscene verses sent to Pound about "Captain Columbo," but these verses, which grossly describe all versions of sexual intercourse, homosexual and heterosexual, human and bestial, prove nothing about Eliot's sexual practices.

Suppositions flow unchecked in all the passages of this biography having to do with Eliot's "homosexuality." Any simple hypotheses of the sexual nature and the sexual fantasies of a soul as complex as Eliot's are likely to be mistaken or reductive. But let us suppose for a moment that the conjecture of homosexuality—which Seymour-Jones is by no means the first to make—is correct, and that Eliot was indeed, after if not before he married Vivien, actively homosexual, using his separate rooms for assignations, and wearing the green powder that Virginia Woolf and Osbert Sitwell observed on his face. Eliot would hardly have been the first homosexual to marry for propriety, or for progeny; he once mentioned to a friend that he had hoped ardently for children. And any number of women have been married to homosexual or bisexual men without thereby being driven to drugs and suicide.

There is not a scintilla of evidence that Vivien ever considered her husband homosexual. Seymour-Jones's statement that in 1923, as a consequence of Eliot's renting separate rooms, Vivien "was forced to acknowledge his sexual preferences" and broke down in consequence, is pure invention. Seymour-Jones seems to think that the chief cause of Vivien's lifelong agony was the sexual incompatibility in the marriage occasioned by Eliot's revulsion from the female body. Although the biographer acknowledges that Vivien was in emotional and physical trouble long before she met Eliot—and was already, from adolescence on, taking a significant variety of drugs purveyed to her by her mother—these facts quietly fade away under the persistent subsequent blaming of Eliot for Vivien's blighted existence. But as George Meredith observed about his own unhappy marriage in *Modern Love*,

> I see no sin:
> The wrong is mixed. In tragic life,
> God wot,
> No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:
> We are betrayed by what is false within.

SEYMOUR-JONES GIVES more detail concerning Vivien's sufferings, her writing, and her social relations than can be found in Peter Ackroyd's life of Eliot, which appeared in 1984, or in Lyndall Gordon's biography of 1998; but the detail is in the end repetitive rather

THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

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LIAH GREENFELD

LIAH GREENFELD is University Professor and Professor of Political Science and Sociology, Boston University. She is the author of *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity.*

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than newly informative. We might, then, in the light of this detail, re-examine Vivien's life not in order to direct personal indignation against one or the other of these unhappy and trapped (and frequently vicious) spouses, but to shed light on a twentieth-century woman who fell afoul of almost every inadequacy of her time and her culture.

The first inadequacy was a medical one. There was at the time no solid knowledge of, or remedy for, mental illness; nor was there any understanding of the hormonal imbalance causing irregular and copious menstruation and mental distress. There was no insight into the lowering of immune response by chronic depression. There were no antibiotics for the repetitive and malign infections suffered by both Eliots. (Their letters are full of medical complaints, especially of "influenza" in every season.) As Vivien's invalidism grew worse, she underwent horrifying medical regimes. She had long been taking "bromides," the sovereign remedy for mental distress. (They were still prescribed, especially to women, in my own youth.) Vivien's skin became blotched and mottled from the effects of these bromides, and she powdered heavily to conceal the disfigurement. Besides "bromides," her mother also procured for the young Vivien (according to her brother Maurice) formaldehyde and "Hoffman's Anodyne" (its solvent was the ether to which Vivien resorted frequently in adult life). Later there were starvation diets (fruit and water), regimes of enemas, constant sleeping draughts (chloral hydrate), and intermittent stays in nursing homes and sanatoriums, with who knows what additional procedures in play. The need for increased dosages created by addictive drugs was not yet known (think of Freud recommending, and taking, cocaine); and because Vivien did not work, she was not checked in her drug-taking by the shaming results of addiction-caused failure in the workplace—being fired, being penniless. Instead she was sheltered by marriage from the consequences of her mental disturbance and her dependency on medications.

Her constant desire to move house; her immediate dissatisfaction once a new place to live had been found; the removal of the ménage from the country to the city, from the city to the country; the ruinous possession of more than one flat at once; the restlessness that no amount of moving could abate: these signs, as well as intensive bouts of shopping for expensive clothes, might now be seen as indices of bipolar illness. But in the past they were inexplicable vagaries. Nor was the *aboulie*—indecisiveness, apathy, passivity, dejection—of which Eliot himself complained diagnosed as a sign of chronic depression until it became so acute that he could rouse himself neither to work, nor to compose letters, nor to rise from bed to answer the door. In the end his friends intervened, and he went off to Switzerland for three months to the sanatorium of Dr. Roger Vittoz. He might well have sunk back into apathy had he not been able to leave his work as a banker for the far more congenial occupation of editor at Faber & Gwyer (later Faber & Faber).

THE SECOND INADEQUACY that Vivien encountered was a family one. Vivien's mother disliked her, and warned her first suitor against her "moral insanity" (a euphemism for promiscuity, according to Seymour-Jones). Vivien's father (in his will) and her brother and her husband (as trustees of that will) thought it unwise—given her character and her financial extravagance as an adult—to allow her to control her inheritance independently. Although Seymour-Jones is harsh on the father, the brother, and the husband for this decision, those who have lived with drug addicts or with relatives who experience manic episodes will understand why it seemed prudent to give Vivien an income rather than allowing her access to her capital. (She, of course, resented such treatment.)

Family inadequacy plagued the Eliots from the American side as well. Eliot's father—disapproving of his son's refusal of a Harvard professorship in favor of an expatriate life and a foreign wife—denied Tom, in his will, the capital that should have been his, reserving it to a trust handled by Tom's mother and his brother Henry. (The will insultingly made the same provision with respect to the capital belonging to Tom's mentally handicapped sister.) Both of the Eliots, in short, lacked parental support, understanding, and encouragement; and Vivien, after her father's death, not only felt the loss of the one parent who had seemed to care for her, but was disillusioned by his treatment of her in his will. Vivien received no support at all from her determinedly disapproving mother-in-law; and his mother's visits after his father's death left Tom exhausted with nervous strain.

The third inadequacy was one almost intrinsic to the condition of wifehood in the earlier twentieth century. Most wives were inadequately educated, and Vivien was no exception. Seymour-Jones is curiously elusive on the dates and the contents of Vivien's education, saying only that "at King Alfred School in Hampstead and later in Margate, where she boarded at Dulwich House School, Vivienne read Hardy and Swinburne and grew to love poetry." It is not clear at what age Vivien left school, nor what subjects she studied; what is certain is that she was, in comparison with her intellectual husband, very superficially educated. Many uneducated wives of gifted men found a vocation in motherhood and housekeeping, but the childless Vivien had no such resources for company and occupation. She never cooked or kept house; the Eliots, though pleading poverty, always employed one servant and sometimes two. Nor did Vivien take any independent job herself, though she for a brief time assisted Russell as a typist.

Tom was wont to refer to his wife as an "invalid," and the detailed chronicle of her neuralgia, colitis, prostration, migraines, and infections makes painful reading. Vivien might have been healthier with a job to engage her energies, but she was thrown entirely back on her husband, whose long hours at Lloyds Bank increased his frustration at the lack of time for writing. Although Vivien made efforts to become friendly with her husband's associates, she was unable to acquire friends of her own; and when the marriage broke up, her husband's acquaintances—to her shame and her chagrin—dropped her. (They had long put up with her for Tom's sake; nobody ever seemed to like Vivien for herself, and she was, intellectually speaking, not a natural inhabitant of the Bloomsbury set in which Eliot moved.)

THE FOURTH INADEQUACY was that of Vivien's worldly knowledge. Like most inexperienced young women, she had no capacity to judge the callousness of the ever-philandering Russell when he made overtures to her in her loneliness and semi-desperate flirtatiousness. Russell had met Eliot in the United States before Eliot's permanent move to England, and he had been impressed by Eliot's philosophical precocity. When he handed over interest-bearing debentures to Eliot as a form of long-term income, Russell was doing no more than many a patron or mentor had done for many a young genius. Russell's own letters confirm that he had an affair with Vivien, but there is no proof that Eliot was aware that the acquaintance between his friend and his wife had gone that far. (For a time all three shared a cottage, from which Eliot was absent except on weekends.)

Seymour-Jones assumes that Eliot cold-bloodedly became a complaisant husband so as to retain the Russell money. It seems rather more in keeping with Eliot's puritanical character that he self-deludingly encouraged the friendship to distract Vivien and to give himself some freedom from her demanding company and her complaints of loneliness. Perhaps he ought to have guessed the truth; he

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knew Russell's views on free love. (Ackroyd, for his part, ascribes the poet's blindness to naïveté.)

As the seventeen years of the disastrous marriage wore on, Eliot withdrew further and further, remaining "correct" in exterior courtesy while beside himself with anxiety, guilt, ill health, and inner anger. Vivien, disinhibited by drugs, acted out more and more hysterically, at home and in company. (The Bloomsbury chorus is vocal on this point.) Some of Vivien's sketches, though unremarkable in literary terms, give a dark picture of life in the Eliot house. In a piece from 1922, Vivien is "Sibylla," while Tom is "André," down from his job in London to spend the weekend in the country with his wife:

> On Saturday came André, wearing a bowler hat, with an anxious expression, and carrying as usual two large suitcases—one filled with books and periodicals and the other with medicine bottles.... André scowled at [the servant Felice]: "Are you quite certain that the milk is 'certified' "? he asked with cold fury, removing the cardboard disk from a milk bottle and peering down at the contents.... André slept till three: he rose liverish and bad-tempered and ate a combined meal of stale lunch and early tea.... He poked about the medicine chest, collected empty bottles, made copious notes, and packed and unpacked suitcases.

Sibylla, meanwhile, "half-jokingly" (according to Seymour-Jones) threatens another resident of the cottage:

> "Ah," said Sibylla, "so you are not indifferent to everything." She played with the knife. "You would not be indifferent for instance if I were just to wipe this knife round your throat."

Later Sibylla "screams at Felice," furious because Felice "has been using Sibylla's Sunlight soap without permission." Seymour-Jones remarks—unconvincingly—that in spite of the neurosis exhibited in this sketch, "in different marital circumstances [Vivien's] highly strung temperament might have found the calm and stability she required."

LEAVING ENGLAND FOR several months to deliver the Norton Lectures at Harvard in 1932–1933, Eliot instructed his solicitors to send to Vivien a letter from him and a deed of separation. They did so the following summer, by which time Eliot had returned to England, though he did not reveal his address to Vivien or his friends. He did not want or intend to divorce his wife, both for

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her sake and for his own, in compliance with his Christian beliefs. But in resorting to a request for separation, he made it possible for Vivien to indulge the hope that his action was not a final one. She refused to sign the separation agreement, and wrote diary passages showing her to be in total denial of her actual straits:

> The only thing I *yearn* for and *bleed* for is the day when Tom *calmly turns the keys* in the front door, walks *leisurely* in . . . and then has a good look round, *smiles* with quiet satisfaction, draws a *long breath*, and goes *quietly* to his *dear* books and to his bed. . . . And if he *can then* say, God bless my little Welsh wife Vivienne. Surely he *would* say that.

Legal dealings are never pretty to read about; and Eliot's behavior—though understandable and defensible, given the impossibility of living any longer with his addicted and irrational wife—terrified Vivien, who had no emotional ties except those binding her to her husband. Unable to believe that he might have "abandoned" her (as she saw it), she tried to convince herself that he was being kept from her by nameless persecutory forces. She haunted his office, to no avail; she was denied access to him.

There were subsequent scenes, which Seymour-Jones invariably represents in ways unflattering to Eliot. We read that in 1934 "the bailiffs came knocking" on Vivien's door. It was more than two years since Eliot had requested her signature on the separation agreement, but she still had not signed it. "The flat," says Seymour-Jones indignantly, "was wrecked; the shelves were wrenched from the walls and not only were all of Eliot's books taken, but many of Vivienne's, including all her copies of the *Criterion*." A few sentences later, however, we learn that the "raid" was "the result of a court order obtained by Eliot's lawyers, Bird & Bird, after Vivienne had failed to respond to his demands for the return of his possessions." It is only by resorting to a footnote that we discover that the court order was dated six weeks before the "raid."

Not only was Vivien refusing to let Eliot have his possessions (including monogrammed Eliot family silver as well as family photographs and personal books and papers), but she had secretly rented an additional flat in the same building in which to store such things; and so the "raid" on her known address did not produce the objects that she had been ordered by the court to return. Vivien's own lawyers had advised her to surrender her husband's personal possessions in obedience to the court order; they subsequently refused to put forward her claim for compensation for damages because "had our advice been taken the necessity for breaking into your flat would not have arisen." A more impartial account than Seymour-Jones's would have recognized not only Eliot's right to his personal possessions, but also Vivien's responsibility for the occurrence of the so-called "raid." Eliot subsequently returned to Vivien her copies of *The Criterion*.

I WISH THIS book had been a more dispassionate one. It is of course true (as Seymour-Jones insists) that Eliot's poetry would have been "different" if he had not been married to Vivien. But since we cannot know what the poetry would have been under altered circumstances, there is no control by which to determine Vivien's "influence on [her husband's] genius." Certainly her influence on his personal life was disastrous, as was his influence on hers. That either of these two unhappy and disturbed creatures would have been better off with a different life-partner may not be doubted; that by the time they were fifty they had been the ruin of each other is certain. Before Vivien was committed in 1938 by her brother (who acted without official help from Eliot, but had his acquiescence) she was picked up by the police, as a letter from her brother to Eliot testifies:

> V. was found wandering in the streets at 5 o'clock this morning and was taken into Marylebone police station. . . . The inspector of the police station told me she had talked in a very confused and unintelligible manner and appeared to have various illusions, and if it had not been possible to get hold of me or someone to take charge of her, he would have felt obliged to place her under mental observation. [Her pharmacist reported, through her doctor] that V. called every day for her medicine, that she appeared to be in a deplorable condition and that they had no idea of her address. . . .
>
> V. had apparently been wandering about for two nights, afraid to go anywhere. She is full of the most fantastic suspicions and ideas. She asked me if it was true that you had been beheaded. She says she has been in hiding from various mysterious people, and so on.

A month later, Vivien's brother wrote to Eliot telling him that Vivien had been committed to "Northumberland House, a private mental asylum." Her brother had gone before a magistrate to obtain an order of involuntary committal. Eliot never visited her (because "the doctors had told him he mustn't," according to his second wife, Valerie Eliot). Seymour-Jones protests:

> [Vivien could have been released from the order of committal and gone to a nursing home] as a voluntary patient, to stay until she was stabilised and well enough to be discharged. Her income was more than adequate to pay for her to live at 8 Edge Street with a nurse and a maid. Permanent confinement had not been necessary.

It defies probability—given Vivien's lifelong drug dependency and the absence of efficacious medical remedies for her various mental and physical illnesses—that she could have lived independently "with a nurse and a maid." There may not have been any viable solution to her case at the time except hospitalization. Eliot received from the hospital, through his solicitors, periodic reports on her condition until she died.

LITERARY HISTORY IS a stage strewn with the corpses of those who might have been saved by better medical remedies at a later date: Chatterton, Keats, Byron, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath. Vivien Eliot is one of these melancholy figures. She and Eliot, taken together, exemplify Shelley's bitter words about marriage in "Epipsychidion." The unhappily married, says Shelley, are "poor slaves. . .

> Who travel to their home among the dead
> By the broad highway of the world, and so
> With one chained friend, perhaps a
> jealous foe,
> The dreariest and the longest journey go.

The dreary and long journey that the Eliots endured together requires a more evenhanded biography than this one if we are to see rightly a tragedy in which the accidents of familial, educational, marital, and medical inadequacy ground into dust the lives of two innocent and hopeful young people. Meredith, at the close of *Modern Love*, renders a verdict on a semi-fictional couple not unlike the Eliots:

> Thus piteously Love closed what he
> begat:
> The union of this ever-diverse pair!
> These two were rapid falcons in a snare,
> Condemned to do the flitting of the bat.

The turgid and slow-moving pages of Seymour-Jones's overstuffed biography require more editing than they have gotten. The text reveals not only a distinct sense of uncertainty about "who" and "whom" ("Winterbourne, whom Daisy notices is as stiff as an umbrella"; "Ottoline decided to look after Vivienne, whom she feared might make a scene"), but also various solecisms. The author seems to

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A Demilitarized Palestinian State

Should Israel, should the world, rely on it?

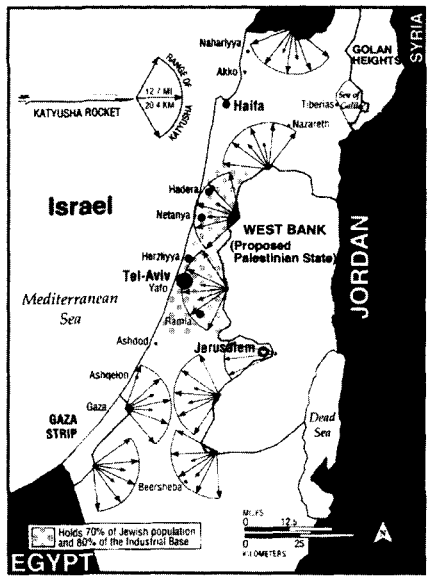
Even the most fervent advocates of a Palestinian state are virtually unanimous that such a state should be "demilitarized," since it might otherwise imperil, or perhaps even endanger, the very existence of Israel. "Demilitarization," it is believed, would obviate any military threat to the State of Israel.

What are the facts?

Israel threatened by enemies. Israel is a very small country. Including the Golan and the "West Bank," it is only one-half the size of San Bernardino County in California. Israel has been in a "cold peace" with Egypt since 1978 and has also concluded a peace treaty with Jordan. Other Arab states are still in a declared or undeclared state of war with Israel. Iran, Moslem though not Arab, is the most determined and deadly of them all. It lurks in the background, its foremost military and political objective being the destruction of the state of Israel.

The "Palestine Liberation Organization" (PLO), now transformed into the "Palestinian Authority" (PA), is a terror organization that has two immutable purposes, namely: to kill as many Jews as possible; and to demolish Israel, the Jewish State, and to replace it with "Palestine". And "Palestine" means "from the River to the Sea," as Arafat never ceases to explain to his followers. It is almost incredible that supposedly levelheaded and well-intentioned people would have entered into a "peace agreement" with such an organization.

Subsequent developments of course have proven the folly of it. The Palestinians have never kept a single one of the solemn promises they made when they signed on to the "Oslo Agreement"; specifically, they have never forsworn the clauses in their "covenant" that call for the destruction of Israel. They have utterly disregarded and violated the limitations imposed on the number of their "police" (army), the restrictions on armament, and, most importantly, the promise not to use violence in order to attain their political goals. Without any provocation, they launched their bloody "intifada," now well into its second year, equipped with heavy armaments smuggled into the territory (98% of the "West Bank" and Gaza) allotted to them by the goodwill of Israel. This armament would have been greatly enhanced had the Israelis not intercepted the KARINE A, a ship laden with over fifty tons of the most advanced weaponry.



A Palestinian state—demilitarized?

The myth of demilitarization. The assumption that "Palestine" would be demilitarized is not tenable. The Arab nations would not allow it, even if the Palestinians themselves so desired. Also, the Palestinian entity would have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as police. They could be helicoptered in minutes to positions on the border with Israel, with armored forces from Syria reaching them within the same night. But such mobilization of the "demilitarized" Palestine wouldn't be required. The weapons of preference of Arab terrorists are the Soviet-made Katyushas, highly effective missiles, truck-mounted and mobile, ideal for hit-and-run raids against Israel. Israel could not prevent them from flooding Palestine. A look at the map makes clear that these rockets, short-range though they may be, would dominate the heartland of Israel. Easily moved and hidden along Israel's new eastern borders—to be increased from less than 40 miles in length to over 200 miles—these Katyushah rockets would rain destruction over most of Israel. They would cover in their entirety Israel's narrow waist that holds 70% of the Jewish population of the country, 80% of its industrial base, its only international airport, and its most important military installations.

A Palestinian state next door to an Israel that would only be nine miles wide at its vulnerable waist, and that could be cut in two by one thrust of a tank column, would leave Israel in constant mortal danger. The Palestinians have proven that they do not want peace -- they want to destroy Israel. Giving them an independent country, even against solemn promises of demilitarization, would ring the death knell for the Jewish State. Only fuzzy thinkers and incurable optimists can believe that an independent Palestine would become a peaceful neighbor of Israel. If Israel ceded the Gaza Strip -- the invasion route since before biblical times -- and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to its sworn enemies, it would make the country indefensible and Israel would have laid the groundwork for its own destruction. Tanks, warplanes, and missiles would only be needed for the final mopping-up process. In the meantime, mortars and Katyushas located on the Judean ridges -- Israel's proposed new borders -- would suffice to paralyze life and industrial and military activity in Israel. One can only hope that ultimately Israel's leaders and the world -- even those who are well-intentioned and wish for Israel's survival -- will understand this danger and that they will not press Israel to make further concessions that will endanger its very existence.

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believe that "prevaricate" means "delay" instead of "deviate from the truth or from moral rectitude." Eliot's mother didn't wish him to go to Paris, and "as his mother prevaricated, he collapsed with an undiagnosed illness." Eliot agonizes over whether to accept the literary editorship of *The Nation*, wanting financial guarantees for five years of employment: "as Tom prevaricated over the question of guarantees ... he was on the verge of collapse." Syntax, too, is often unsteady: "Like these women, all women, the 'living worms' of original sin lay coiled in her guts." Roxbury is said to be in "North Cambridge," and the mountains of Mourne are misspelled as "Morne." The cover of this book detached itself from its pages as I was reading it. Writers and their editors and their publishers should do better. And Vivien Eliot—the "restless painted shadow" of Eliot's *The Family Reunion*—should have been commemorated by the sort of biographer who is resolved, in the words of Wallace Stevens, "not to console / Or sanctify, but plainly to propound." ■

Hymns and Gyms

By CALEB CRAIN

Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920 by Clifford Putney

(Harvard University Press, 280 pp., $39.95)

LIKE "political correctness," the term "muscular Christianity" started as a joke. It was first used in 1857 in the *Saturday Review* of London to describe the philosophy of the adventure novelist and Anglican clergyman Charles Kingsley: "His ideal is a man who fears God and can walk a thousand miles in a thousand hours—who, in the language which Mr. Kingsley has made popular, breathes God's free air on God's rich earth, and at the same time can hit a woodcock, doctor a horse, and twist a poker round his fingers." The anonymous critic who coined the phrase trusted his readers to find it at least mildly ridiculous.

In Christianity as it was commonly understood, after all, the body compromised the soul. It was to be mortified. Fasting, chastity, kneeling, and even pole-sitting could be Christian, but not push-ups. Moreover, churches in the first half of the nineteenth century had grown steadily more feminine, especially in America. Women crowded out men in the pews, and women's taste determined hymns, sermons, and general ecclesiastical style. Churchgoing ladies liked to hear about homely virtues and heavenly rewards; they were not interested in biceps or eye-hand coordination.

In his new book, Clifford Putney undertakes to explain when and how the joke ceased to be funny, and to chart its subsequent career as an earnest ideal in America. Putney is less interested in the why than he might be, and he is formal and gossip-less about the who, but on the when and the how he is comprehensive. His book makes a solid contribution to social history, though a dry one.

"Muscular Christianity can be defined simply as a Christian commitment to health and manliness," Putney begins, in his neutral, well-defended style. He briefly recounts the birth of the ideal in England, where Kingsley and his fellow novelist Thomas Hughes hoped that manly vigor would save the Anglican Church from both asceticism and aestheticism, build character in the future bureaucrats of the British Empire, and dissolve class conflict in the spirit of fair play. It informed the highly distinctive culture of the English public school, where boys learned ritual sadism, fine-grained social stratification, idealization of high-scoring sportsmen, furtive buggery, honor, and loyalty.

America would make something slightly different out of muscular Christianity—something more religious (at least for a while), focused less exclusively on youth, and appealing to a broader range of social classes. Putney identifies the Unitarian minister Thomas Wentworth Higginson as the first to import it. Higginson was premature. The Civil War rendered musculature superfluous to most men his age. As Putney notes, "the war ... undermined muscular Christianity in America by certifying the manliness of innumerable men." It would be the next generation, with first-hand experience of veterans but not of combat, who felt the need for it.

Stephen Crane, for example, too young to have served in the Civil War that he described in *The Red Badge of Courage*, confided to Hamlin Garland that he had based his battle scenes on his memories of playing football. The metaphorical equation of sports and war was typical of Crane's fin-de-siècle generation. It was famously denounced as "womanized" by Basil Ransome, a character in Henry James's *The Bostonians*, which appeared in 1886. "The masculine tone is passing out of the world," Ransome complained; "it's a feminine, a nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age."

AS IT HAPPENED, masculinity did not pass out of the world. The anxiety that it would disappear, though, was quite elaborate. Much of it was racist (effeminate Anglo-Saxons were said to be committing "race suicide") or misogynist (the education of boys was said to be jeopardized by the "woman peril"). It could take the form of a disease called neurasthenia, whose symptoms included "headaches, backaches, worry, hypochondria, melancholia, digestive irregularities, nervous exhaustion, and 'irritable weakness,'" and whose hallmark was paralysis of the will. The traditional treatment was rest. Muscular Christians, by contrast, prescribed exercise, and however naïve their campaign may appear in retrospect, it was less toxic than the scapegoating of city dwellers as vicious or the indictment of immigrants and women for the theft of the white man's moxie.

It may even have gone some distance toward healing the wound from which men were suffering. Putney offers no new insights into the nature of that wound, but he relays those of others, notably E. Anthony Rotundo, whose study *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (1993) set the standard for scholarship on the history of masculinity. Rotundo believes that the acute anxiety of late-nineteenth-century men was caused by a dramatic change in the way their gender was defined. Since the Federalist era, the ideal man had been he who governed his passions well, and this man had been recognizable by his socioeconomic independence. By the end of the century, however, manhood was understood to reside in the passions themselves—governed, ungoverned, or ungovernable—and few adult males could expect to earn a living without serving a boss. More volatile and more

CALEB CRAIN is the author of *American Sympathy: Men, Friendship, and Literature in the New Nation* (Yale University Press).

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dependent, men were turning into what used to be called boys.

TO APPRECIATE THE impact of this change, consider the shifting priorities of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). As Rotundo indicates and as Putney explains in detail, the Y's original purpose was to socialize young men by helping them learn how to master their impulses. In practical terms, this meant providing a place in the city where they could stay out of trouble—a domestic-like lounge where they could read, converse, and hold Bible classes. The first YMCA gyms were introduced merely as lures, designed to attract men too unruly to attend a Bible class for its own sake. Over the years, however, the leaders of the YMCA reconsidered their philosophy. They came to believe that a young man's spiritual and physical health were indivisible. Since every human body was a temple of the Holy Spirit, the YMCA could best prevent vice in young men by helping them to acquire the strength to resist it.

By these lights, a gym was more than a stepping stone on the path to Bible study. It was in itself a means of salvation. Eventually all YMCAs had gyms. Eventually, in fact, YMCAs would be little more than gyms. No one intended that. Whereas other historians of the period's "masculinity crisis"—Rotundo, Gail Bederman, Kristin Hoganson, and most recently John F. Kasson—have been attracted to the social psychology of it, Putney focuses on organizations and institutions, and the question that fascinates him as a historian is what happens to a group's mission once it begins to alter its style and message to compete for customers.

The customers sought by muscular Christianity were men. In 1910, a YMCA survey found that two-thirds of American church members were female. Their predominance was long-standing. For decades Protestant leaders had known that men considered churches impractical and over-emotional, and that they preferred to join all-male lodges when they wanted to do good works in a spiritual environment. Ministers felt themselves to be part of the problem. "Where in all the sweep of freaks and failures, of mawkish sentiments and senseless blathery," a self-hating reverend expostulated in 1899, "can there be found an object to excite deeper disgust than one of these thin, vapid, affected, driveling little doodles dressed up in men's clothes, but without a thimbleful of brains in his pate or an ounce of manhood in his anatomy?"

When churches set out to make themselves more relevant to men, remarkably little theology went into the decision. It seems to have fallen under the interdict of masculine disgust. And so churches committed themselves to the support of endeavors that were fated, in their maturity, to leave churchly aims behind. Muscular Christianity was a grand, collective act of wishful thinking. After all, a person may pursue good health and good character without holding any opinions about God or the afterlife. And the saving of souls cannot really be made into a practical or unemotional business.

Before they were reconciled to these disappointments, however, Protestant leaders created a whole new class of public and semi-public institutions. The YMCA grew from a single Boston chapter in 1851 to 725 chapters in 1912, and it gave America the teamwork-intensive sports basketball and volleyball. Christian men's clubs such as the Gideons, the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, and the Knights of Columbus were launched to compete with secular lodges such as the Masons and the Odd Fellows. Elite Episcopal high schools such as Groton refashioned themselves as training grounds where the sons of the idle rich could learn self-discipline. For the sons of the idle middle class, there were summer camps, staffed by "trained Christian specialists." The camps' success in combining moderate wilderness and adult supervision inspired what Putney calls "the paramilitary nature organizations": the Boys' Brigade, Seton's Woodcraft Indians, the Sons of Daniel Boone, and the Boy Scouts of America. Nor were males the only beneficiaries of the institution-building. Putney's chapter on the Young Women's Christian Association, the Camp Fire Girls, and the Girl Scouts helps to distinguish muscular Christianity from more narrow-minded responses to the crisis of American masculinity.

THE END CAME when the military metaphors turned literal. The recovered neurasthenic Theodore Roosevelt was a hero to muscular Christians, and they followed him gladly into the Spanish-American War. "It's been a generation since we let blood," a YMCA columnist wrote in 1898, and "now we feel the old Anglo Saxon passion to go out and kill somebody." Kristin Hoganson has hinted that the masculinity crisis may have been partly to blame for America's imperialist missteps: "The political pressure to assume a manly posture and appear to espouse manly policies gave gender beliefs the power to affect political decision-making." (The cautious Putney neither agrees nor disagrees with Hoganson; he merely mentions her thesis in a footnote.) Even before the revelation of American atrocities in the Philippines, many Christians began to have second thoughts. They turned to pacifism, and for two more decades they continued to hope that muscular Christianity could provide what William James called "the moral equivalent of war"—a nonviolent alternative to the classic ratifier of manhood.

Unwisely, they relinquished that hope during World War I. They embraced the war. The president of the General War-Time Commission of the Churches justified it as a "war against war." This cataclysm would be the acme of muscular Christianity, as well as its downfall. Reform raised the prestige and the numbers of the chaplaincy (the young Reinhold Niebuhr complained of their "rather too obvious masculinity"), and the YMCA provided more relief services than the Red Cross and handled nine-tenths of the military's welfare work, which included recreational and educational programs for enlisted men. Unfortunately, the Y's preaching was resented by veterans, who remembered the free cigarettes from the Knights of Columbus more fondly. And the carnage and the pointlessness of the war left the clergy permanently disenchanted with even a metaphorical militancy.

Another recent study of the period also argues that World War I finished off a dream of masculinity. In *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America*, John F. Kasson writes that the war "represented the powers of modern depersonalization and mechanization at their most ghastly." It led to disillusionments that sharply diminished the appeal of the three entertainers Kasson chronicles: bodybuilder Eugen Sandow, escape artist Harry Houdini, and *Tarzan* author Edgar Rice Burroughs. Kasson writes about the same male anxieties that concern Putney, but in Kasson's book Christianity does not have anything to do with their resolution. Sandow, Houdini, and Burroughs made no moral claims on their audiences. They were offering fantasies—daydreams of the male body as more beautiful, more resistant to capture, and less tame than in most cases it was. They do not seem to have inspired men to change the bodies they had. They may even have relieved them of the impulse.

Muscular Christianity, on the other hand, did inspire personal change. The reader misses in Putney's book the sympathetic appreciation and the eye for the telling detail that are in Kasson's book, but Putney has the more significant subject. Muscular Christianity was an attempt to bridge a split that men felt between their animal natures and their moral ideals, and to recover from an insult to male prestige by self-improvement. Like many things that look silly later, it was not only misguided, it was also heroic. ■

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Age Limit

PICKING UP *THE WASHINGTON Post* recently, I found two pieces that showed just how far we have traveled down Yasir Arafat's moral dead-end road. The first was a dispatch from Gaza City by Edward Cody, which described the apparent debate over suicide bombings currently afoot in the Hamas stronghold. "Some suicide attacks, [the people and leaders of Gaza] have concluded, surpass the limits of what is acceptable, even for a people with its back against the wall," Cody reported. And what makes "some" of these attacks unacceptable? It is not, alas, the nature or the age of the targeted victims—civilians, oftentimes children. Rather, it is the age of the perpetrators and the efficacy and extent of the murder. Cody paraphrased Ismail Abu Shenab, quaintly identified as a "Hamas activist," to the effect that the attacks "should not be carried out by such young boys ... and should be planned in a way that gives them a real chance of inflicting damage on Israel."

THE OCCASION FOR THIS INTROSPECtion was the death of three 15-year-old boys after their ineffective assault on nearby Netzarim. By contrast, an attack committed by a 17-year-old on a school of "army-bound religious Israelis at the Gush Katif settlements" that killed seven "young cadets" in southern Gaza "remained within the bounds of what is acceptable." Why? Because the 17-year-old had been trained in the use of his rifle and grenades, and he was "a long-time follower of ... a legendary Hamas activist ... who was killed by Israeli troops after a lengthy run of leading anti-occupation agitation." Imagine: the Gazan equivalent of the debate over the drinking age.

THE SUBSTANCE OF INTERNAL PALESTinian and Arab debate over the murder of innocents has turned not just on the appropriate age of the designated killer but also on precisely which innocents to kill and when. There is the orthodox view of the president of Syria, who believes all Israeli civilians are legitimate targets. There is the Saudi Arabian corollary, which is that Israel cannot legitimately respond to attacks committed by Saudi-sponsored Hamas "activists" because to do so would undermine the Saudi-sponsored "peace process." There is the recently muted position that any attacks on Israeli civilians should be directed at settlers only. There is disagreement as to whether the deaths of Israeli-Arab civilians who frequent restaurants are acceptable collateral damage, though the prevailing opinion seems to be that they are. On one thing all parties agree: Seeking out and shooting a 5-year-old through the head on the West Bank is just fine. But let us not imagine consensus is easy to reach on all matters. There is the Arafat policy that suicide bombings must be tactically opposed at certain moments, versus the Hamas policy that suicide bombings must continue until Israel is destroyed. Then there is the vexing question of whether American civilians are legitimate targets. Who would have thought the deliberate targeting of civilians contained so many rich aspects for debate?

THE CENTRAL MEDIA CONCEIT OF THE last 20 months is that the upsurge of attacks on Israeli civilians is explained by Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But it's more accurate to say that the upsurge of attacks is explained by Israel's *de-occupation* of these territories during the Oslo process. The Palestinian Authority permitted the militarization of these areas and embedded a political culture that worships the killing of civilians. A related myth is that Arafat suffers politically from enabling these attacks. In fact, his popularity among Palestinians, and Arabs in general, rises with the frequency of these civilian murders; and he suffers no parallel reduction in support from Europe or the United Nations. The Bush administration, meanwhile, continues to advocate a Palestinian state in the near future and to accept Arafat as the Palestinians' leader. And this failure to stigmatize and penalize the murder of civilians, troubling enough among politicians, has now suffused the language of the American media as manifested in Cody's own prose.

A MORE SUBTLE, AND MORE DEPRESSing, article in the same issue of the *Post* came from THE NEW REPUBLIC's distinguished former editor Michael Kinsley, titled "ANSWERING SHARON." Kinsley asked how the Bush administration could insist that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon display restraint in response to what Cody might call "anti-occupation agitation" and negotiate with the P.A. at a time when the president has declared an all-out war on terrorism. The answer, according to Kinsley, is that "terrorism is not an evil that transcends all other considerations. This does not mean, as some would have it, that suicide bombing is justified as a legitimate response of an oppressed people. There may be circumstances where that is true, but the circumstance of the Palestinians ... is not even close. Nevertheless, an illegitimate tactic used in a legitimate cause, as part of a conflict with legitimate and illegitimate tactics and aspirations on both sides, is different from an illegitimate tactic used for purposes that are utterly crazed and malevolent. In short, circumstances matter. They may not matter morally, but they matter in terms of what you do about it."

SORRY, MICHAEL. APOLOGIES ALSO TO the P.A., the 20 Arab autocrats, the Iranian theocracy, numerous other prominent Sunni and Shiite clerics from around the world, the European Union, Kofi Annan and his many U.N. organs, CNN, certain circles at the U.S. State Department, and the American university left. There are simply no circumstances in which the premeditated targeting of innocent civilians is justified. And the widespread, institutionalized use of this illegitimate tactic by what Cody calls "activists," even in a supposedly legitimate cause, not only undermines that cause, but also calls into question the very legitimacy of that cause.

TO SEE WHY THIS IS SO, SUPPOSE THE Israelis were to agree with the 75 percent of Palestinians who back the age-appropriate suicide bombers. Why not employ the (admittedly illegitimate) tactic of targeting innocent Palestinian civilians in the (admittedly legitimate) service of Israeli self-defense? Why not use superior force to kill as many Palestinians as possible before some of those people kill Israelis? It would indeed be self-defense. It would also be a disaster. The tactic of deliberately attacking civilians, which the Palestinians are so obtusely debating (and much of the world is so readily tolerating), depends for its success only on the moral superiority of the adversary—on the willingness of the Israelis to refrain from the abhorrent behavior the Palestinians broadly support. Similarly, Osama bin Laden's widely held belief that he promotes Islam by destroying the World Trade Center is dependent on America's willingness to refrain from destroying the sacred sites of Islam, which it could surely do. By relying on the superior morality of their enemies, the advocates of terrorism concede their own immorality and forfeit their own legitimacy. And it's hard to think of a consideration that this particular form of evil "transcends."

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